

Universidad del Salvador
Facultad de Filosofía, Historia y Letras
Doctorado en Lenguas Modernas

**LEARNING ENGLISH IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
A STRATEGY-TRAINING PROGRAMME IN LISTENING AND NOTE-TAKING
AN INTEGRATED APPROACH**

GLADYS GRACIELA GONZÁLEZ CARRERAS

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**Learning English in the Foreign Language Classroom:
A Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking
An Integrated Approach**

Gladys Graciela González Carreras

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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A thesis written by
Gladys Graciela González Carreras

Supervisor: Cristina Emilia Mayol, M.A.

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Supervisor

Examiner

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"Language learning is indisputably an emotional and interpersonal process as well as a cognitive and metacognitive affair".

(Rebecca Oxford, 1990)

ABSTRACT

Foreign language learning in academic settings proves, on many occasions, a fruitless experience. The language knowledge and skills students gain in the language classroom become insufficient to deal successfully with language requirements inside and outside the learning environment. In order to optimise the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) at the university level, a strategy-training programme (STP) in listening and note-taking was conducted at *Facultad de Ingeniería – Universidad Nacional de Misiones, Argentina*. Informed decision was made in favour of direct, integrated strategy instruction in the classroom to train students in the use of language learning strategies (LLS). A multi-method approach was used to assess the impact of the STP on the development of the subjects' interlanguage. A one-group pre-test post-test design was implemented and elicitation techniques were supplemented in order to observe the intervention study from more than one standpoint. Findings indicated significant improvements in academic listening and writing skills. In conclusion, the STP proved useful for advancing the subjects' level of proficiency and achievement in the target language. Furthermore, results demonstrated that strategy training could aid less successful learners in reaching higher levels of achievement, which would have been rendered impossible otherwise.

Keywords: Foreign language learning; Language learning strategies; Strategy training; Listening and note-taking

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CHAPTER 1

An Overview

INTRODUCTION

"The level of achievement for the majority of language students in typical academic setting is disappointingly low" (Horwitz, 1995:578). Learning a foreign language (FL) is a very complex phenomenon. Many are the intervening variables which account for successful learning. They include: language aptitude, cognitive style, beliefs, attitudes, motivation, language learning strategies, and other variables that students bring into the language classroom, together with teaching practices which foster or hinder language development. However, there is room for modification of some variables in the learning environment which may advance learners' proficiency in the target language (TL).

The present work aimed at improving the level of achievement of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) of the students at *Facultad de Ingeniería (FI) – Universidad Nacional de Misiones (UNaM)*. To accomplish this, language learning strategies (LLS) were used to develop listening skills as a means to learn the target language.

The optimal goal of L2¹ listening development is to allow for the L2 to be acquired through listening, not only to allow the learner to understand spoken messages in the L2.

Rost (2002:91)

Students at FI - UNaM attend two levels of English as part of the curriculum. In the first level the main concern is to develop reading and writing skills. In the second level the development of listening skills is pursued as the main objective, though, we continue with reading, writing and we start developing translation techniques and speaking skills. Each level is a ninety-hour subject. Since 2002, there has been a third level of English which is optional and is devoted to developing speaking skills, mainly, academic speaking.

¹ Further in the paper, a distinction will be made between FL/ L2 (second language).

In 2006, a new syllabus was implemented to teach students of the second level. Two units – Cultural Change (IT) and Global Issues (Urbanisation) – from the textbook *Academic Listening Encounters* by Kim Sanabria (2004) CUP, was chosen as part of the current syllabus. The material consisted of lecture and interview simulations and includes note-taking strategies and techniques. Most students found the task hard to perform. It was thought that students could enhance their performance in listening and note-taking by means of direct, integrated, strategy instruction. 'Integrated' means that learning strategy instruction should be integrated with classroom instruction in the language or content subject. 'Direct' means that students are informed of the value and purposes of strategy training (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:152-3).

As a result of the pedagogic decision made in favour of a direct, integrated, strategy instruction, a Strategy-training Programme (STP) in Listening and Note-taking was devised to be carried out in the first semester of 2007. A battery of instruments was developed to measure its effects.

AN INTEGRATION OF STRATEGY-BASED AND TASK-BASED APPROACHES

The STP was shaped around two main foci: a task-based approach and a strategy-based approach. In order to help students meet their needs, a series of target and pedagogical tasks was developed for the first-semester language course. The target tasks were listening to segments of lectures and interviews and taking notes. The instructional materials were taken from the textbook which is currently in use in the regular teaching programme. The pedagogical tasks were specially prepared exercises and activities which enabled the learners to complete the target tasks. In preparing the pedagogical tasks, consideration was given to which listening skills could be developed through the texts. The tasks were structured around a simple format of pre-, while-, and post-task activities to facilitate overall language learning. The pre- and post-activities were designed around the while-activity, namely, note-taking (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005).

The second focus of the STP was to make the learners aware of the strategies they used while completing the tasks and how they might develop their LLS. Exposing learners to a range of language learning strategies gives them the opportunity to find out which strategies work best for them. These LLS can then serve as the basis of future language development, and it is hoped, be used when learners listen to content subject lectures (ibid).

INTERVENTION STUDY

To carry out this study a non-experimental² (no control group) design was produced (Chamot, 2001). The design consisted of the one group pre-test – post-test. The researcher measured a group – students attending their second level of English at FI - UNaM on a dependent variable – academic listening comprehension – and then introduced an experimental manipulation – direct, integrated, strategy instruction. Following the experimental treatment, the researcher measured again academic listening comprehension and proceeded to account for differences between pre-test and post-test scores by reference to the effects of the direct, integrated strategy instruction. Quantitative and qualitative data collected with the different measuring instruments were brought together in an attempt to explain more fully the richness and complexity of the study (Cohen & Manion, 1994:233).

STUDENTS' NOTES

The first step in the Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking was to write the student's notes so that the teaching material for the programme would be appealing and relevant for the learners. The notes followed the classroom textbook material, *Academic Listening Encounters* by Kim Sanabria (2004) CPU, but it was enriched with theory and practice by two other textbooks: *Study Listening: Understanding lectures and talks in English* by Tony Lynch (2004). CUP; and *Study Skills in English* by Michael Wallace (2004) CUP. In addition, Oxford's description of selected strategies (1990) was used to train students in the use of LLS.

The notes consisted of eleven lessons based on research findings in the field (Rost, 2002; Lynch, 2004). Each lesson highlighted techniques and strategies appropriate for the development of listening and note-taking skills (see Appendix 1). They are as follows:

1. An Overview
2. Note-taking Techniques
3. Lecture Internal Structure
4. Listening to Interviews
5. Building Background Knowledge on the Topic
6. Predicting
7. Monitoring

² Nunan (1992:41) and Cohen & Manion (1994:165) call this type of design pre-experimental.

8. Responding
9. Clarifying
10. Inferencing
11. Evaluating

Each lesson involved:

- Focusing on strategies which would be practised in the lesson;
- Setting objectives for the lesson;
- Pre-listening (building background knowledge);
- First listening (guided note-taking for main ideas);
- Second listening (detailed note-taking);
- After-listening (pair work: comparing notes: content and format);
- Follow-up (e.g. personalising the topic, troubleshooting);
- Whole-class discussion of strategy use.

LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

A learning styles quiz (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:66-7) was administered on the first lesson of the programme (see Appendix 2). The aim was twofold: on the one hand, to engage students in the learning process and, on the other, to know the students' learning styles.

PRE-TEST

After the first lesson which consisted of an overview of the programme and the administration of the learning style quiz, and before proper instruction in strategies began, a test on listening and note-taking was taken by the learners to compare pre- and post-test results. The genre chosen was that of the interview. This was done on the assumption that if learners had any experience in listening that would be in interviews rather than lectures. Pre-listening activities were presented to activate the learners' previous knowledge on the content. A frame-format was provided and students wrote down notes about the different items of the interview as they listened. It was a four-minute recording, which was played twice (see Appendix 3).

Rating Students' Test Performance

In order to score students' tests a standard outline format was used (Oxford, 1990:89). The listening content was analysed and grouped into main ideas, supporting ideas, details and nuances (see Appendix 3). Each group was given a score. Then, the resultant hierarchy was compared with the information the learners were able to write down in the test. The final score was given on the ability of the learners to identify the relevance of different information. The score was expressed in a percentage scale.

LEARNING PROCESS

Each lesson lasted for three hours. The session was introduced by the teacher where first, she explained the potential benefits of the strategies to be learnt. Then, she described them, and finally she modelled these strategies for the students to see how they worked. Then, the learners did the target and pedagogical tasks to practise the strategies by means of peer work. Finally, they discussed the strategies used as a whole-class task.

POST-TEST

The same score criteria used for the pre-test were used for the post-test. The genre was now the lecture. Nevertheless, both, the pre- and post-tests subject matter was about Urbanisation. There were pre-listening exercises to activate prior knowledge. The internal structure of the mini-lecture was presented to serve as guide for note-taking (see appendix 4). The students wrote down notes about the different topics discussed in the mini-lecture as they listened. It was a four-minute recording, which was played twice.

SURVEY

On the same day of the post-test, after the students submitted their tests, a survey was conducted to collect the learners' opinions on the effects of the STP on their learning experience. The survey used a five-point Likert-type scale (see Appendix 5).

INTERVIEWS

Three learners were invited to participate in an interview to speak about their experience in the STP. The sample selection was made on the following criteria: One student was chosen because he had previously attended the second level, but had not passed the course on that occasion and had to re-attend the subject. It was thought he would provide relevant information on the application of listening strategies for problem-solving as compared to the former method used for learning listening skills. The second interviewee was selected because he wrote his post-test in Spanish, though he showed great understanding of the content of the mini-lecture. Finally, a third student was chosen at random, who was thought to represent the average student attending the STP. The interviews followed a structured format (see appendix 6).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Much of the research on learning strategies has been descriptive. Larsen-Freeman (in Breen, 2001:22-3) mentions some studies which have correlated strategy use with proficiency and gender; such were the works of Green and Oxford (1995); and Huda (1998). On the other hand, and following the same author, a second interest in research conducted in this area has been on whether or not learners at varying levels of instruction can learn how to improve their comprehension and production of an FL through strategy-based instruction. In this area, she lists works conducted by Chamot & O'Malley (1994); Cohen et al. (1998); Dörnyei (1995); McDonough (1995); Mendesohn (1994); Nunan (1996); and Oxford (1993).

The present study was concerned with the second area of research on learning strategies. Researchers have striven to answer the following questions:

1. Can effective language learning strategies be taught?
2. Does instruction in language learning strategies actually have an impact on proficiency and achievement in the target language?
3. Can less successful students be taught to use learning strategies in a way that can contribute to higher achievement levels?

This intervention study intended to answer these questions in the local context, and as a result, to improve the teaching and learning of academic listening, so that our students might achieve

the level of success which currently characterises only a small proportion of language learners dealing with EAP in the context of Argentina. In addition, the study attempted to serve as a model for those university teachers who are concerned with their students' low level of achievement in any of the FL skills necessary at the university level, since the STP may be tailored to meet whatever needs students may have for advancing their interlanguage³.

³ The concept "interlanguage" is thoroughly explained in the Literature Survey Chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Survey

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Second language (L2) learning and foreign language (FL) learning are different concepts in that, broadly speaking, a second language is learnt within the speech community of the target language (TL); whereas, a foreign language is learnt in a speech community where the TL is not the language of everyday communication, but rather studied, mainly, in academic settings.

A distinction between *second* and *foreign* language acquisition is sometime made. In the case of second language acquisition, the language plays an institutional and social role in the community (i.e. it functions as a recognised means of communication among members who speak some other language as their mother tongue). In contrast, foreign language learning takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom.

(Ellis, 1994:11-2)

Furthermore, *acquisition* and *learning* are depicted as separate processes in linguistic theories. The former is unconscious, and the latter, conscious.

There are two independent ways of developing ability in second languages. 'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilise in acquiring their first language, while 'learning' is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language.

(Krashen, 1985:1)

Conversely, in cognitive theories the concepts *learning* and *acquisition* refer to the same process because it is argued, in the present state of our knowledge we cannot make reliable statements about the distinction between both terms, or about the contribution which each

makes to a person's ability in an L2 (Littlewood, 1998:76-7). Moreover, some elements of language use are first learnt consciously and then become unconscious or automatic through practice (Oxford, 1990:4).

Some specialists even suggest that learning cannot contribute to acquisition, i.e. that 'conscious' gains in knowledge cannot influence 'subconscious' development of language. However, this distinction seems too rigid. It is likely that learning and acquisition are not mutually exclusive but are rather parts of a potentially integrated range of experience.

Oxford (1990:4)

On practical grounds, all these concepts are superseded by a general term *second language acquisition*.

There is a need for a neutral and superordinate term to cover both types of learning. Somewhat confusingly, but in line with common usage, the term 'second language acquisition' will be used for this purpose

(Ellis, 1994:12)

Following Ellis's thought, *acquisition* and *learning* on the one hand, and *second* and *foreign* language, on the other, are terms which are used here interchangeably to refer to the process of learning a foreign language in an academic setting.

INTERLANGUAGE

According to Ellis (1997:140), Selinker (1972) coined the term *interlanguage* to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 that is independent of both the target language and the learner's L1.

It is used to refer to both the internal system that a learner has constructed at a single point in time ('an interlanguage') and to the series of interconnected systems that characterise the learner's progress over time ('interlanguage' or 'the interlanguage continuum').

(Ellis, 1994:350)

The concept of interlanguage involves the following premises about L2 acquisition (Ellis, 1997:33-4):

1. The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules which underlies comprehension and production of the L2. This system of rules is viewed as a 'mental grammar' and is referred to as an 'interlanguage'.
2. The learner's grammar is permeable. That is, the grammar is open to influences from the outside (i.e. through the input). It is also influenced from the inside (i.e. by the internal mental processing)
3. The learner's grammar is transitional. Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system.
4. Some researchers claim that the systems learners construct contain variable rules. That is, they have competing rules at any one stage of development. Other researchers argue that interlanguage systems are homogeneous and that variability reflects the mistakes learners make when they try to use their knowledge to communicate. These researchers see variability as an aspect of performance rather than competence.
5. Learner employs various learning strategies to develop their interlanguage. The different kinds of errors learners produce reflect different learning strategies. For example, omission errors suggest that learners are in some way simplifying the learning task by ignoring grammatical features that they are not yet ready to process.
6. The learner's grammar is likely to fossilise. Only about five per cent of learners go on to develop the same mental grammar as native speakers (NS). The majority stop some way short.

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

Three different views on the nature of second language acquisition are briefly outlined here: the behaviourist, the mentalist and the cognitive.

Behaviourist accounts of L2 acquisition ignore the internal processing that takes place inside the learner because they reject the idea of the mind as an object for inquiry. They account for learning in terms of imitation, practice, reinforcement, and habit formation. Because language development is viewed as the formation of habits, it is assumed that a person learning an L2 starts off with the habits formed in the L1 and these habits interfere with the new ones needed for the L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 1999:35).

To the behaviourist, the human being is an organism capable of a wide repertoire of behaviours. The occurrence of these behaviours is dependent on three crucial elements in learning: a stimulus, which serves to elicit behaviour; a response triggered by a stimulus; and reinforcement, which serves to mark the response as being appropriate (or inappropriate) and encourage the repetition (or suppression) of the response in the future.

(Richards & Rogers, 2001:56).

Mentalist theories, or linguistic theories, or innatist theories, as they are also known, are concerned with the abstract principles which shape the way the grammar of any particular language is represented in the mind of a speaker (Ellis, 1994:415). Learners are equipped with innate knowledge⁴ of the possible forms that any single language can take (ibid:243). In this view, human beings are born with a powerful piece of machinery called the language acquisition device (LAD) which enables us to acquire our native language without conscious effort. Though Chomsky has not directly addressed L2 acquisition, some of his followers (e.g. Cook, White, Bley-Vroman, Krashen) have been highly influential in this field. The goal of a linguistic L2 theory should be to describe and explain the nature of the learner's competence at different stages of his interlanguage development, rather than the learner's performance and strategies (ibid).

Findings in cognitive psychology and computer sciences have helped shape theories on L2 acquisition. Cognitive psychology understands learning as a process of construction. Without disregarding the influence of the environment, this paradigm also considers that the learner is an active agent in the learning process whose actions depends greatly on the mental representations which he has elaborated as a result of previous relations with his physical and social surroundings. In cognitive views "second language acquisition is best understood as a complex cognitive skill" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:19).

A cognitive theory of language acquisition sees linguistic knowledge as no different in kind from other types of knowledge, and views the strategies responsible for its development as general in nature, related to and involved in other kinds of learning. Knowledge is considered to be inseparable from actual use...The focus, therefore, is not on abstract linguist knowledge, but on the extent to which the learner has

⁴ Also called Universal Grammar (UG). Chomsky's term for the abstract principles that comprises a child's innate knowledge of language and that guide L1 acquisition (Ellis, 1997:144).

achieved mastery over the formal and functional properties of language and the mental processes involved.

(Ellis, 1994:347-8)

Before the end of the critical period⁵, language acquisition is indeed, qualitatively different from other learning, but after the period is over, language learning is constrained by similar structures and processes to other learning

(Skehan, 1998:2-3)

So, having briefly sketched these three theories, let us consider which theory best suits the purpose of this work. Behaviourist views cannot adequately account for L2 acquisition and they fell out of favour in the early 1970s. On the one hand, they do not account for what goes on in the learner's mind; and on the other, there is no room for learning improvement as learning mechanisms are innate and are beyond the learner's control. Mentalist views claim that language knowledge is innate and treats linguistic knowledge as unique and separate from other knowledge systems. Their defendants (e.g. Cook) argue that learning a language means learning vocabulary and setting parameters for the morphological-based aspects of the lexicon⁶. Furthermore, Skehan (1998:80) argues that UG "is good at describing a formal, underlying competence (and possible learning in the pre-critical period stage), but is less convincing with second language learning, with real-time communication, and with the relationship between performance and change". A Cognitive view states that learning an L2 is similar to learning any other skills and, therefore, under the control of learners and teachers. Thus, this theory best suits the purpose of improving L2 learners' performance by means of strategy instruction in this context.

⁵ The critical period hypothesis, lately called the 'sensitive' period, states that target-language competence in an L2 can only be achieved if learning commences before a certain age (e.g. the onset of puberty) is reached. (Ellis, 1997:138).

⁶ Available at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Writings/Papers/Seville96.htm>
"Strategies and UG Theories" Vivian Cook. Retrieved: October 2006.

A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

In cognitive theory, individuals are said to "process" information and the thoughts involved in this cognitive activity are referred to as "mental processes" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:1). It introduces an information processing theory of memory. The theory stresses the active nature of mental processes during learning and describes the types of information stored in long-term memory as distinguished from short-term memory, the gateway to long-term memory. Information in the long-term memory consists of declarative knowledge, or the facts we know, and procedural knowledge, or the complex cognitive skills and other processes we know how to perform. Language is stored much like any other complex cognitive skill but, like other procedural information is learned differently from factual information (ibid:13). The skill-building hypothesis states that we first learn rules or items consciously and then gradually automatise them through practice (Ellis, 1994:280).

In this cognitive psychology paradigm, new information is acquired through a four-stage encoding process involving: selection, acquisition, construction and integration. Through *selection* by means of sensory memory, learners focus on specific information of interest in the environment, and transfer that information into working memory⁷. In *acquisition*, learners actively transfer information from working memory into long-term memory for permanent storage. In the third stage, *construction*, learners actively build internal connections between ideas contained in working memory. The information from long-term memory can be used to enrich the learner's understanding or retention of the new idea by providing related information or schemata into which the new ideas can be organised. In the final process, *integration*, the learner actively searches for prior knowledge in long-term memory and transfers this knowledge to working memory. Selection and acquisition determine how much is learned, whereas construction and integration determine what is learned and how it is organised (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990:17-18).

The theoretical framework in which second language acquisition is discussed here is based on a comprehensive model of cognitive skill learning. According to O'Malley and Chamot (ibid:19) this approach has several advantages. First, considerable research in cognitive skill acquisition has occurred in recent years in such disciplines as cognitive psychology and in the information processing aspects of computer sciences. By applying relevant theories and models developed

⁷ The concept short-term memory has been superseded by working memory, a system which contains rehearsal loops and also a central executive component which is concerned with the allocation of a limited amount of attention. In addition working memory contains those records from long-term memory that are currently in a state of high activation and which may therefore interact with new material which has just been encountered (Skehan, 1998:44).

in these other disciplines to the study of second language acquisition, it is possible to provide a comprehensive and well-specified theoretical framework. A second advantage to viewing second language acquisition as a cognitive skill is that it provides a more detailed process view of second language acquisition than is provided by most current models of second language learning. A third advantage is that viewing language acquisition as a cognitive skill provides a mechanism for describing how language learning ability can be improved. A fourth advantage is a pedagogical one; a cognitive approach favours the development and use of learning strategies in second language instruction.

SKILL LEARNING MODELS OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) Model

This model rests on the distinction between *declarative* and *procedural* knowledge. The essential differences are characterised in the form of three assumptions:

1. Declarative knowledge seems to be possessed in an all-or-none manner; whereas procedural knowledge seems to be something which can be partially possessed.
2. One acquires declarative knowledge suddenly, by being told, whereas one acquires procedural knowledge gradually, by performing the skill.
3. One can communicate one's declarative knowledge verbally, but not one's procedural knowledge (Anderson, 1976 cited in Ellis 1994: 388).

Learning a language, like any other type of skill learning, such as driving a car or typing, involves the development of procedures which transform declarative knowledge into a form that makes for easy and efficient performance (ibid).

This transition of declarative to procedural knowledge takes place in three stages (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 25-6):

The Cognitive Stage: This stage involves conscious activity and the acquired knowledge is typically declarative. This knowledge enables the learner to describe how to communicate in the L2, but the knowledge by itself is inadequate for skilled performance, since the performance at this stage is very deliberate and evidences many errors.

The Associative Stage: during this second stage, two main changes occur with reference to the development of proficiency in the skill. First, errors in the original declarative representation of stored information are gradually detected and eliminated. Second, the connections among the various components of the skill are strengthened. Basically, in this stage declarative knowledge is turned into its procedural form. However, the declarative representation initially formed is not always lost. Thus, even as we become more fluent at speaking a foreign language, we still remember its grammar rules. Performance at this stage begins to resemble expert performance, but it may still be slower and errors still occur.

Foreign language learners typically only reach the associative stage. Thus, although foreign language learners achieve a fair degree of proceduralisation through practice, and can use L2 rules without awareness, they do not reach full autonomy.

(Ellis, 1994:389)

The Autonomous Stage: During this stage, performance becomes increasingly fine-tuned. The execution of the skill becomes virtually automatic, and errors that inhibit successful performance of the skill disappear. It is important to note, that skilled performance improves gradually. While a fact can often be learnt in one trial, a complex skill such as L2 learning can only be mastered after a relatively long period of practice.

McLaughlin's Information Processing Model

Although McLaughlin's ideas have developed somewhat over the years, it is possible to identify a number of central theoretical tenets related to (1) the idea of processing limitations and (2) the need for restructuring (Ellis, 1994:389-390).

Learners are limited in how much information they are able to process by both the nature of the task and their own information processing ability. They are not capable of attending to all the information available in the input. Some of it becomes the object of selective attention, while other parts are attended to only peripherally. In order to maximise their information processing ability, learners routinise skills. Initially a skill may be available only through controlled processing. Controlled process practices result in automatic processing which involves the activation of certain nodes in memory every time the appropriate inputs are present. Routinisation, therefore, helps learners to reduce the burden on their information-processing

capacity. Routinisation results in quantitative changes in interlanguage by making an increasing number of information chunks available for automatic processing.

We economise by stitching together language chunks which free processing resources during communication so planning for the form and content of future utterances can proceed more smoothly.

(Skehan, 1998:3)

Changes related to both the way knowledge is represented in the mind of learners and also the strategies they employ are called restructuring. Restructuring allows for qualitative changes in interlanguage. Representational change involves a shift from exemplar-based to rule-based representation. Restructuring is also facilitated by the flexible use of learning strategies. 'Expert' language learners display greater flexibility in restructuring rules, and are therefore able to avoid making certain types of error. Practice is very important for restructuring.

Restructuring occurs when the mismatch between current knowledge and required knowledge is resolved. Restructuring can be induced by giving learners tasks which have to encourage L2 hypothesising, under conditions such as collaboration and peer support.

(ibid, 1998:58)

LEARNING STYLES

Learning styles are the approaches students prefer to adopt when learning and they are generally consistent behaviour. Learning style is a concept which has been developed from extensive work into cognitive styles, that is, how people think and act in certain ways (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:62).

Learning styles refer to a learner's more habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills.

(Reid, 1995:viii)

Violand-Sánchez (in Reid, 1995:49) mentions Witkin et al. (1971) who claim that the field (or environment) influences the observer's perception along a continuum whose two extremes are

called field-dependent (FD) and field-independent (FI). Viñol-Sánchez argues that individuals with a FD mode of perception are unable to perceive elements for themselves as separate from their background or environment. They are also considered global learners, i.e. they learn holistically rather than discretely. In contrast, FI individuals, also called analytic learners, perceive the field (and themselves) as separate from the surrounding environment.

Concerns were raised over Witkin's use of the term field-dependent because of the possible negative connotation associated with the word "dependent". The expression was substituted by the word "sensitive" arguing that it more positively and appropriately labelled this learner's heightened sensitivity to the social and physical environment (Kinsella, in Reid 1995:180).

FI style is associated with the ability to restructure visual stimuli. It has been related to analytic ability. In contrast, field-sensitive (FS) style is associated with skills in interpersonal relation. Individuals may differ in their cognitive style flexibility, that is, some individuals are more fixed in their FI/FS orientation, while others are more mobile, showing characteristics of both cognitive styles depending on the learning situation. The key to L2 success is mobility that allows learners to exercise a sufficient degree of the appropriate style in a given context (Chapelle, in Reid 1995:160).

There appears to be an obvious relationship between one's language learning style and his or her usual or preferred language learning strategies. This leads learners to favour the use of some strategies and avoid others. This suggests that both, styles and strategies affect learning outcomes (Oxford, 1989:n.p.).

IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Helping students understand their language learning style can become part of general 'learner training'. Learner training consists of enabling students to understand their learning styles and the LLS typically associated with these styles. It also includes training students to "stretch" their learning style through systematic use of new, relevant LLS (Oxford, in Reid 1995:44-5).

By using data on language learning styles, teachers are better able to spot any style conflicts in the language classroom. Teachers can also vary their instructional techniques to meet the needs of students with contrasting style learning. An important suggestion is to provide a wide range of activities so that students can feel integrated in the learning environment (ibid).

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Learning Strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.

(Oxford, 1990:8)

These strategies can facilitate the internalisation, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

(Oxford, 1992/1993 cited in Lessard-Clouston 1997:n.p.)

There are a number of basic characteristics in the generally accepted view of language learning strategies (LLS). For Instance, Oxford (1990:9) lists twelve features of LLS:

1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed
3. Expand the role of teachers
4. Are problem-oriented
5. Are specific actions taken by the learners
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly
8. Are not always observable
9. Are often conscious
10. Can be taught
11. Are flexible
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors.

Let us see them in more detail:

Communicative competence as the main goal: All appropriate LLS are oriented toward the broad goal of communicative competence⁸. LLS help learners participate actively in authentic communication.

Greater self-direction for learners: LLS encourage students to become autonomous learners. Self-directed students gradually gain greater confidence, involvement, and proficiency.

⁸ In Hymes's views (1972), a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

New roles for teachers: Teachers become facilitators, helpers, guides. New teaching capacities also include identifying students' learning strategies, conducting training on learning strategies, and helping learners become more independent.

Problem orientation: LLS are tools. They are used because there is a problem to solve, a task to accomplish, an objective to meet, or a goal to attain.

Action basis: LLS are specific actions or behaviours accomplished by students to enhance their learning.

Involvement beyond just cognition: LLS are not restricted to cognitive functions, such as those dealing with mental processing and manipulation of the TL. LLS also include metacognitive functions like planning, evaluating, and arranging one's own learning, as well as affective and social functions.

Direct and indirect support of learning: Some LLS involve direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case the TL. These are known as direct strategies. Others include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies which contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning. These are known as indirect strategies. Direct and indirect LLS are equally important and serve to support each other in many ways.

Degree of observability: LLS cannot always be seen. For instance, cooperating with peers or taking notes are strategies which can be witnessed, but strategies like inferencing or self-monitoring are not available for the human eye.

Level of consciousness: LLS especially in the declarative stage are always conscious; however, after a certain amount of practice and use, LLS, like any other skill or behaviour can become automatic. In fact, making appropriate LLS fully automatic – that is, unconscious – is often a very desirable goal, especially for language learning.

Teachability: Some aspects of the learner's makeup, like learning style or personality traits are very difficult to change. In contrast, LLS are easier to teach or modify. This can be done through strategy training. Even the best learners can improve their strategy use through such training. Strategy training helps guide learners to become more conscious of strategy use and more adept at employing appropriate strategies.

Flexibility: There is a great deal of individuality in the way learners choose, combine and sequence strategies; as a result, LLS are not always found in predictable sequences or precise patterns.

Factors influencing strategy choice: Many factors affect the choice of LLS, such as, degree of awareness, stage of learning, task requirement, teacher expectation, age, sex, ethnicity, general learning style, and purpose for learning the language. Purpose is related to motivation (Oxford, 1990:8-14).

Motivation is probably the most important characteristic that students bring to a learning task.

(O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:160)

If motivation – the will to learn– is the most important characteristic that learners bring into the classroom (ibid), it deserves due attention. In addition, motivation is an aspect which allows for intervention. If well tackled, learner motivation can be enhanced and as a result it can render positive learning outcomes in the short, mid, and long run.

The learner's enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are key determinants of success or failure. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of an L2, regardless of their language aptitude or other cognitive characteristics. Without sufficient motivation, however, even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language.

(Dörnyei, 2001a:5)

Cognitive theories of motivation suggest that students' expectations regarding success and failure, together with the extent to which they value the learning task, determine the amount of effort they are willing to expend as well as the degree to which they will persist in a learning activity (Wenden, 1991:111).

Motivational strategies are techniques which promote the individual's goal-related behaviour. They are influences which are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effects (Dörnyei, 2001a:28). Examples of motivational strategies are: paying attention, setting goals and objectives, planning for a language task, self-monitoring, self-evaluating, making positive statements.

LISTENING STRATEGIES

Within recent studies, there is broad agreement on the kinds of strategies that are frequently associated with successful listening (Rost, 2002, Lynch 2004). By incorporating them into listening activities, the teacher gives students an opportunity to practise them:

1. **Predicting:** Predicting information or ideas prior to listening.
2. **Inferencing:** Drawing inferences about complete information based on incomplete or inadequate information.
3. **Monitoring:** Monitoring their own performance while listening, including assessing areas of uncertainty.
4. **Clarifying:** Formulating clarification questions about what information is needed to make a fuller interpretation.
5. **Responding:** Providing a personal, relevant response to the information or ideas presented.
6. **Evaluating:** Checking how well they have understood, and whether an initial problem posed has been solved.

Presentation of listening strategies by itself tends to be insufficient to ensure learner progress. In order for learners to take advantage of strategy training, they need awareness of the strategy, opportunities to see it demonstrated in actual discourse, understanding of its potential benefits, as well as targeted practice in using the strategies and experiencing its effects (Rost, 2002:155-157).

Conditions for a listening strategy to be teachable

1. The learner recognises a need to address 'confusion' or to compensate for incomplete information.
2. There is a recognisable point in the discourse in which a strategy (an alternate way of processing language or interacting) can be used.
3. The alternate way has a probable payoff in knowledge or affect that the learner seeks (e.g. to understand more of the listening extract).
4. The alternate way of processing can be practised again in an immediate context.
5. The new use of the alternate produces the demonstrable effect (on interaction, understanding, or learning) (ibid: 157).

Selection of the Language Learning Strategies for the Instruction

To develop the strategy-training programme in listening and note-taking Oxford's Language Learning Strategy System (1990) was chosen. The reason for this was that the researcher found it more comprehensive and detailed than other taxonomies (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wenden, 1991). In Oxford's work (ibid), LLS are divided into two major classes: direct and

indirect. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups (memory, cognitive, and compensation under the direct class; metacognitive, affective and social under the indirect class). They are further divided into nineteen strategy groups and sixty-two subsets. Direct strategies and indirect strategies support each other and each strategy group is capable of connecting with and assisting every other strategy group.

To fit the purpose of this work twenty-eight LLS out of these sixty-two subsets were chosen, two memory strategies, eight cognitive strategies, two compensation strategies, nine metacognitive strategies, four social strategies, and three affective strategies.

The point of incorporating strategy instruction into language teaching is not to 'accomplish' as many strategies as possible, but rather to focus the learner's attention on particular cognitive plans they can employ to help them overcome obstacles in language use or language learning.

Rost (2002:111)

STRATEGY TRAINING

Learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. The general goals of such training are to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learner and teacher, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practise strategies that facilitate self-reliance.

(Oxford, 1990:201)

One of the principal goals of strategy training is to alter students' beliefs about themselves by teaching them that their (academic) failure can be attributed to the lack of effective strategies rather than to the lack of ability or to laziness.

(Wenden, 1991:111)

An unresolved issue in instruction in learning strategies is whether instruction should focus only on learning strategy instruction or should be integrated with classroom instruction in the language subject. Arguments in favour of separate training programmes advance the notion that strategies are generalisable to many contexts and that students will learn strategies better if they can focus their attention on developing strategic processing skills rather than try to learn content at the same time. Those in favour of integrated strategy instruction programmes, on the

other hand, argue that learning in context is more effective than learning separate skills whose immediate applicability may not be evident to the learner, and that practising strategies on authentic academic and language tasks facilitates the transfer of strategies to similar tasks encountered in other classes (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:152).

Another controversial issue is whether the actual training – whether separate or integrated – should be direct or embedded. In direct instruction, students are informed of the value and purpose of strategy training, whereas in embedded instruction, students are presented with activities and materials structured to elicit the use of the strategies being taught but are not informed of the reasons why this approach to learning is being practised (ibid:153).

Important effects of training in use of LLS have been discovered by a number of researchers. It is clear that students can be taught to use better strategies, and research suggests that better strategies improve language performance. Just how LLS should be taught is open to question, but so far it has been confirmed that strategy training is generally more effective when woven into regular classroom activities than when presented as a separate strategy course.

(Oxford, 1989:n.p.)

Based on L2 strategy training research, the following principles have been tentatively suggested (Oxford, 1994:n.p.):

- L2 strategy training should be based clearly on students' attitude, beliefs, and stated goals.
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and the learners' style of learning.
- Training should, if possible, be integrated into regular L2 activities over long periods of time rather than taught as a separate, short intervention.
- Students should have plenty of opportunities for strategy training during language classes.
- Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study.
- Affective issues such as anxiety, motivation, beliefs and interest – all of which influence strategy choice – should be directly addressed by L2 strategy training.
- Strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.

- Strategies training should not be solely tied to the class at hand; it should provide strategies that are transferable to future language tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be somewhat individualised, as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.
- Strategy training should provide students with a mechanism to evaluate their own progress and to evaluate the success of the training and the value of the strategies in multiple tasks.

STEPS IN THE STRATEGY TRAINING

In order to carry out the current training programme in listening and note-taking, Oxford's model was followed (1990:203-08). It consists in an eight-step sequence. It is particularly useful for long-term strategy training in regular language learning environments. The first five steps are planning and preparation steps, while the last three involve conducting, evaluating and revising the training:

Step 1: Determine the Learners' Need and the Time Available

First, consider who the learners are, their learning needs, and what strategies will be beneficial for them to develop. Then, decide how long the strategy training will take, and when it will be appropriately to do so.

Step 2: Select Strategies Well

First, choose strategies which are related to the needs and characteristics of your learners. Second, opt for more than one kind of strategy to teach by deciding the kinds of compatible mutually supportive strategies that are important for the students. Third, choose strategies which are generally useful for most learners and transferable to a variety of language situations and tasks. Fourth, decide on some strategies which are very easy to learn, and some strategies which are very valuable, but might require a bit more effort.

Step 3: Consider Integration of Strategy Training

It is most helpful to integrate strategy training with tasks, objective and materials used in the regular language lessons. It is also necessary to show learners how to transfer the strategies to new tasks, outside of the immediate ones.

Step 4: Consider Motivational Issues

Consider the kind of motivation you will build into your training program. Consider whether to give scores or partial course credits for attainment of new strategies. Another way to increase motivation is to let learners participate in classroom management by choosing the language activities they will do and the strategies they will learn.

Step 5: Prepare Materials and Activities

Regular classroom material will do for strategy training materials. In addition, teachers might develop some handouts on when and how to use the strategies they want to focus on. Furthermore, a handbook for learners can be developed to be used in class and at home, specially for long term strategy training.

Step 6: Conduct "Completely Informed Training"

Four levels of information are possible in strategy training. Level A consists of encouragement of strategy use in general without special training. Level B is called *blind training*. At this level the tasks or materials themselves call for the use of particular strategies, which are unconsciously used by the learners. No information is given about the significance of those strategies. Level C is informed strategies. The learners are both induced to use a particular strategy and given some information concerning the importance of that strategy. Level D consists of completely informed training. The learners are not only instructed in the use of strategy training, but are also explicitly instructed in how to employ, monitor, and evaluate that strategy.

Step 7: Evaluate the Strategy Training

Learners' own comments about their strategy use are part of the training itself, and provide useful feedback. Teachers' observation during and after the training sessions is useful for evaluating the success of the strategy training. Possible criteria for evaluating training are task improvement, maintenance of the new strategies over time, transfer of strategies to other relevant tasks, and improvement in learners' attitudes.

Step 8: Revise the Strategy Training

Step 7 (evaluation) will suggest possible revisions for the teaching materials. Improvements throughout the previous steps can be done to tailor strategy training to the students' needs in the light of new information.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

O'Malley and Chamot (1988 cited in O'Malley & Chamot 1990:158) present a sequence to follow in the actual training of LLS:

1. Preparation: Develop student awareness of different strategies through:
 - small group retrospective interviews about school tasks
 - modelling think-aloud, then having students think aloud in small groups
 - discussion of interviews and think-alouds
2. Presentation: Develop student knowledge about strategies by:
 - providing rationale for strategy use
 - describing and naming strategy
 - modelling strategy
3. Practice: Develop student skills in using strategies for academic learning through:
 - cooperative learning tasks
 - think alouds while problem solving
 - peer tutoring in academic tasks
 - group discussions
4. Evaluation: Develop student ability to evaluate own strategy use through:
 - writing strategies used immediately after task
 - discussing strategy use in class
 - keeping dialogue journals (with teacher) on strategy use
5. Expansion: Develop transfer of strategies to new tasks by:
 - discussion on metacognitive and motivational aspects of strategy use
 - additional practice on similar academic tasks
 - assignments to use learning strategies on tasks related to cultural background of students.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH WORK ON LISTENING STRATEGIES

Chamot (in Breen, 2001:34-5) reports a number of studies carried out to investigate the effects of strategy training on the development of listening skills. In many of the studies on listening which she cites the task was listening to and viewing a video, then completing a comprehension measure.

She states that in the O'Malley et al. (1985) study, the task consisted in listening to and viewing a video, then answering comprehension questions about it. Students in the intervention group were taught to use selective attention, take notes and cooperate with a classmate to review their notes after listening. Results showed that the strategies were helpful for the videos that students found personally interesting, but not for those that were less interesting or for which students lacked appropriate prior knowledge.

Other researchers who Chamot (ibid) mentions are Rubin, Quinn and Enos (1988) who taught high school students of Spanish to use learning strategies while listening to/viewing a video, and then, compared three different types of strategy instruction to the control group, which had no strategy instruction. This study documented many problems associated with classroom-based experimental studies. For example, teachers often had difficulty in implementing the learning strategy lessons, and students used the instructed strategies only when the video was challenging.

Chamot (ibid) also comments on work carried out by Ross and Rost (1991) who developed instruction in listening comprehension strategies used by Japanese college students learning English. The researchers first identified differences in clarification strategies used by higher and lower proficiency level students. Then, the students were randomly assigned for learning strategy training to one of three different videos and taught the strategies previously identified for higher proficiency students. The result showed that lower proficiency level students could successfully learn to use the same questioning strategies that were used by more proficient students to increase listening comprehension.

Lastly, Chamot also refers to work done by Thompson and Rubin (1996) who conducted a study on the transfer of listening strategies taught. Third-year college students of Russian viewed a variety of authentic Russian video clips over the course of an academic year. One class was taught metacognitive and cognitive strategies for improving comprehension of the video material, and the other class viewed the same video but had no strategy instruction. Students receiving strategy instruction showed significant improvement on the video comprehension post-test compared to students in the control group. A standardised audio-only listening comprehension test was also administered to participating students, and on this measure (which did not test what had been taught), the improvement of the experimental group approached, but did not reach, significance. In addition, students in the strategy group demonstrated metacognitive awareness through their ability to select and manage the strategies that would help them comprehend the videos.

On the other hand, Rost (2002:234-7) also lists some research carried out on listening strategies. For instance, he reports a study on effective note-taking, summarising and review practices carried out by himself (1990). He also gives an account of a study of listening strategies with the use of "think-aloud" protocols⁹ conducted by Kasper (1984). Finally, he mentions Vandergrift's extensive study (1996), involving retrospective self-report, in which learners described in an interview, the techniques they had used to comprehend recorded L2 (French) texts and their teacher while in class, as well as any out-of class listening in French.

Furthermore, Flowerdew (1994) edited a collection of papers on academic listening. Issues covered include: quantitative and qualitative approaches to the investigation of academic listening, processes employed by listeners in understanding academic discourse, the discourse structure of lectures, and the teaching and testing of academic listening skills. This account of studies conducted on listening strategies does not mean to be exhaustive, but rather to provide some representative samples of previous work carried out in the field.

LISTENING TO ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS

THE ROLE OF LISTENING IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Why would listening work for second language acquisition? According to Bialystok (in Brown et al., 1994:137-138) UG remains available in some measure to language learners throughout life. Input is essential if it is to sort out the settings needed for the target language. Simply listening, then, has its primary benefit in constructing hypotheses about the structure of the second language. These hypotheses can be represented in the language-specific system that is tagged onto the abstract representation of language. Although there may be some advantage to lexical and phonological acquisition, syntax would appear to be the main beneficiary of extensive listening to the target language.

Rost (2002:90-1) claims that for a person to learn an L2 three major conditions are required: (1) a learner who realises the need to learn the TL and is motivated to do so; (2) speakers of the TL who know it well enough to provide the learner with access to the spoken language and the support (such as simplification, repetition and feedback) he needs for learning it; and (3) a

⁹ "Think-aloud protocols are techniques in which subjects complete a task or solve a problem and verbalise their thought process as they do so (Nunan, 1992:117).

social setting which brings the learner in frequent and sustained enough contact with target-language speakers to make language learning possible.

Input

The samples of language to which a learner are exposed are called input. Cognitive theories claim that the learner, in order to acquire the language, must come to understand the input and pay attention to the forms of the input (e.g. Skehan, 1998). Rost (2002:122-135) mentions five important features of language input:

Relevance: language input is relevant if it relates to learner goals and interest, and involves self-selection and evaluation.

Authenticity: language input should aim for user authenticity, first by aiming to be appropriate to the current needs of the learners, and second, by reflecting real use of language in the real world.

Genuineness: language input should aim to be genuine, i.e. involving features of naturally occurring language with and between native speakers: speed, rhythm, intonation, pausing, etc.

Genres: language input should include a range of genres and discourse types which learners are likely to encounter in their contact with the TL.

Simplification: simplified input is effective for language learning only if it helps the listener become more active, that is, more able to activate background knowledge, make inferences, and more willing to respond to what he hears.

Input Processing

There is a crucial contrast between comprehension-based and processing-based approaches to input (Skehan, 1998:47). The former is dominated by the need to extract meaning. The key term in this connection is the comprehensible input hypothesis which "claims that humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or receiving 'comprehensible input'" (Krashen, 1985:2). However, Skehan (ibid) argues that input for comprehension may not lead to any focus on form, and consequently, he favours the processing-based approach which is more concerned with the control of attention during comprehension and the way different cues can be focused on, for example, through the development of appropriate listening strategies. The processing approach is useful for training language learners in effective processing, to make them more able to notice relevant cues in the input so that form-meaning links are more likely to be attended to, and as a result, development in the interlanguage system can occur, that is,

input can become intake¹⁰. The focus for instruction in input processing is to maximise the efficiency of the input-to-intake stage. The role of instruction is not necessarily therefore in the clarity or explanation it provides, but rather in the way it channels attention and brings into awareness what otherwise would have been missed (Skehan, 1998:48-9).

Output Production

Krashen argues that "speaking is the result of acquisition not its cause" (1985:2). However, Swain (1985 cited in Ellis 1994:282) counterclaims that learners need the opportunity for meaningful use of their linguistic resources to achieve full grammatical competence. She argues that when learners experience communicative failure, they are pushed into making their output more precise, coherent and appropriate. She also states that production may encourage learners to move from semantic (top-down) to syntactic (bottom-up) processing. Whereas, comprehension of a message can take place with little syntactic analysis of the input, production forces learners to pay attention to the means of the expression.

Swain suggests a number of specific ways in which learners can learn from their output. First, output can serve a consciousness-raising function by helping learners to notice gaps in their interlanguage. That is, by trying to speak or write in the L2, they realise that they lack the grammatical knowledge of some feature which is important for what they want to say. Second, output helps learners to test hypotheses. They can try out a rule and see whether it leads to successful communication or whether it elicits negative feedback. Third, learners sometimes talk about their own output, identifying problems with it, and discussing ways in which they can improve it, i.e. they use metacognitive strategies to advance in their interlanguage (Ellis, 1997:49).

COMPREHENSION

Flowerdew (1994:8-10) states that according to linguistic theory, there are at least five types of knowledge which will be called upon in the comprehension process as it is related to listening: pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, lexical and phonological. Psycholinguistic theories posit that these areas of knowledge interact with the different processes facilitating each other.

¹⁰ Intake is that portion of the input that learners attend to and take into short-term memory. Intake may be subsequently incorporated into interlanguage (Ellis, 1997).

There has been a tendency on the part of comprehension theorists to see different processes involved in comprehension as being in a hierarchical relationship. Thus for considerable time, scholars conceived of comprehension as a "bottom-up" up process, starting with "lower level" decoding of the language system, and the representation in working memory of this decoding then being interpreted in relation to "higher level" knowledge of context and the world. Later scholars working with "top-down" models posited the "highest level" pragmatic, inferential processes as the starting point, with linguistic data at the "lower levels" being processed only if required by comprehenders' expectations and goals (ibid).

Most scholars now accept the view that comprehension involves a variety of processes, all of which interact, but in what way it is not yet possible to say. However, many second language theorists see comprehension as a two-stage process, the first stage consisting of purely linguistic processing and the second of application of the results of this linguistic processing to background knowledge and context (ibid).

Finally, some allusion should be made to schema theory. Underlying structures are referred to as schemata which account for the organisation of text in memory and which allow for hypotheses to be generated regarding possible interpretation of texts. They are, thus, a key element in top-down text processing (ibid).

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Although there is an overall high correlation between reading and listening comprehension abilities, listening in a second language involves a set of skills in its own right. The distinctive features of listening comprehension can be grouped under two main headings: real-time processing and phonological and lexico-grammatical features (Flowerdew, 1994:10).

A listening text exists in time rather than space; it is ephemeral and must be perceived as it is uttered. Although there is redundancy in spoken texts, listeners do not have the same degree of control over them as readers do, who can dwell on parts of the text, skip over other parts, back-track, etc. (ibid).

The processing of the sound system and the particular lexico-grammatical features of spoken texts require the application of particular sets of knowledge on the part of listeners.

Linguistic features of spoken text are listed below (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:48):

- phonological contraction and assimilations
- hesitations, false starts, and filled pauses
- sentence fragments rather than complete sentences structured according to tone units rather than clauses
- frequent occurrence of discourse markers at beginning or end
- tone groups
- high incidence of questions and imperatives
- first and second person pronouns
- deixis (references outside the text).

SUCCESSFUL LISTENING

The teacher or researcher interested in developing or studying listening faces a fundamental problem: it is impossible to gain direct access to the listening process itself. We can never actually observe the problems students may experience and the skills they use. We are only able to deduce what the listeners did with the message and what they found difficult by examining their response – whether spoken, written or non-verbal (Anderson & Lynch, 1988:7).

As a general rule, listening exercises are more effective if they are constructed around a task, that is, students are required to do something in response to what they hear that will demonstrate their understanding. In real life when we listen to someone talking we have a definite non-linguistic reason for doing so. In the classroom the genuine reason for listening is purely linguistic (to improve the students' listening skills), and a non-linguistic purpose has to be consciously superimposed in the form of a task. If the learner knows in advance that he is going to have to make a certain kind of response, he is immediately provided with a purpose in listening, and he knows what sort of information to expect and how to react to it (Ur, 1984: 25-26).

A TASK-BASED APPROACH TO LISTENING

The main idea behind a task-based approach to listening is that students become active listeners. With this approach students are asked to listen to what are described as "authentic" situations and to "do something" with the information. The information is usually transferred from

spoken text to a graphic form. The result of a task-based activity can be open-ended. For example, while listening to a short lecture, students may be required to make notes and draw a simple diagram. Different students will have their own way of recording the information. The way they do this is not as important as being able to report the information they have understood. The process students employ in finding a successful outcome to the task is more important than being able to understand all the spoken text presented to them. According to the task-based approach, students need to use holistic inferential strategies (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005: 14).

Instruction in which learners are given tasks to complete in the classroom makes the assumption that tasks in this way will engage naturalistic acquisitional mechanisms, cause the underlying interlanguage system to be stretched, and drive development forward (Skehan, 1998:95).

A task is an activity in which:

- meaning is primary
- there is some communication problem to solve
- there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities
- task completion has some priority
- the assessment of the task is in term of outcome (ibid).

As in the case of note-taking, a task might be the medium to develop a cognitive strategy which generates a whole series of lessons, in which case the teacher might well have in mind that longitudinal development on the part of learners should be fostered, and achieved, while only one (extended) task is being accomplished (Bygate et al., 2001:5).

Hierarchical Task Structure of Listening

Rost (2002:110) posits that the acquisition of skills involved in any communication task requires the coordination of information from multiple domains. Because L2 listeners have finite mental capacities, many required skills must be automatised for the listener to function in communication. Listening tasks and instruction should aim to help learners automatise 'lower-level' processing of language so that they can devote more attention to 'higher level' goals (see Table 2.1). In order to achieve first-order goals, one must achieve, with some degree of completeness and efficiency, the previous goals.

Table 2.1 Hierarchical task structure of listening. *Source:* Adapted from Rost (2002).

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Lower-order goals: | understand sounds speaker uses |
| Third-order goals: | understand words and structures understand cohesion between utterances understand gist of input understand pragmatic conventions |
| Second-order goals: | activate relevant knowledge to understand speaker and topic establish appropriate connection with speaker or content understand social meaning of input (including speaker's intentions) |
| First-order goal: | respond to relevant aspects of what is heard. |

ACADEMIC LISTENING

Flowerdew and Miller (2005:89-90) comment on a recurrent finding on several ethnographic studies on academic listening: the close integration of listening with other processes and activities. For instance, in the lecture context, students not only are required to listen to what the lecturer says but also have to read a handout and look at visual aids. They probably need to take notes. Before the lecture, they may have been expected to do some preparatory reading. And following the lecture, they may be required to participate in a tutorial and/or to do a written assignment. Later, they may have to sit for an exam. All of these activities, which accompany the listening process, are likely to affect the way individuals actually listen.

Research into the lecture comprehension process is of value in applied linguistics because an understanding of how lectures are comprehended can suggest appropriate ways to encourage second language learners to listen to lectures. It can thus feed into ESL¹¹ teaching methodology, on the one hand, and learner strategy training, on the other.

(Flowerdew, 1994:8)

A useful starting point for thinking of lectures as vehicles of instruction is to realise that the genre of lecturing is communicative. Rather than being mere presentations of excess of quantities of information (that the listener is supposed to ingest), academic lectures are a prime example of a communicative situation in which a speaker aims to 'influence with intent'. The

¹¹ English as a Second Language.

intention may be to raise awareness, to inform, and to change the audience's attitudes about ideas presented (Rost, 2002:162).

When students listen to a lecture, they may already have some background knowledge of the subject and be able to predict a little of the content of the lecture. However, there are three problematic areas:

1. decoding, i.e. recognising what has been said
2. comprehending, i.e. understanding the main and subsidiary points
3. taking notes, i.e. writing down quickly, briefly and clearly the important point for future use.

The act of decoding involves not only recognising unit boundaries phonologically, but also the recognition of 'irregular pausing, false starts, hesitations, stress and intonation patterns. Students may be inexperienced in listening to fluent, native speaker spoken English together with its colloquialisms, and idiomatic expressions, apart from probable difficulties caused by the use of weak forms and contractions. Comprehension difficulties may be compounded by insufficient knowledge of the specialist subject (Jordan, 1997:179).

The lecture genre itself brings its own potential areas of difficulty. Especially problematic is "the requirement to be able to concentrate on and understand long stretches of talk without the opportunity of engaging in the facilitating functions of interactive discourse, such as asking for repetition, negotiation of meaning, using repair strategies, etc." (Flowerdew, 1994:11).

A way to achieve greater lecture comprehension in the classroom is to provide simplification by means of chunking, that is, presenting the input in short chunks (e.g. one-to three-minute segments), followed by opportunities for clarification before continuing (Rost, 2002:132).

Note-taking can also cause problems (Jordan, 1997:179-80). As a skill, it involves several processes, among which are:

- ability to distinguish between important and less important information
- deciding when to record the points (so that other important points are not missed while writing)
- ability to write concisely and clearly in a kind of personal shorthand which will probably make use of various devices, e.g. abbreviation, symbols, special layouts.
- ability to decipher one's own notes at a later date and to recall the essence of the lecture.

Richards (1983, cited in Jordan 1997:180-1) has summarised the range of topics associated with research into lectures by constructing a taxonomy of micro-skills needed for academic listening:

1. ability to identify purpose and scope of lecture
2. ability to identify topic of lecture and follow topic development
3. ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g. major ideas, generalisation, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples)
4. ability to identify role of discourse markers in signalling structure of a lecture (e.g. conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines)
5. ability to infer relationships (e.g. cause, effect, conclusion)
6. ability to recognise key lexical items related to subject/topic
7. ability to deduce meanings of words from context
8. ability to recognise markers of cohesion
9. ability to recognise function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g. pitch, volume, pace, key)
10. ability to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter
11. ability to follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual
12. ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed
13. familiarity with different styles of lecturing: formal, conversational, read, unplanned
14. familiarity with different registers: written versus colloquial
15. ability to recognise irrelevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings
16. ability to recognise function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude
17. knowledge of classroom conventions (e.g. turn-taking, clarification requests)
18. ability to recognise instructional/learner tasks (e.g. warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions).

LISTENING TO INTERVIEWS

Why are interviews included in the STP if they are not a genre included in the study of academic listening?

The STP was intended to be integrated in the regular current lessons. The instructional material used in the subject included simulated interviews. They provided opportunities for students to move from informal to academic discourse. In addition, the interviews allowed students to learn

more vocabulary, personalise the topic, shape and express their opinions and to practise note-taking.

NOTE-TAKING

Note-taking is a cognitive macro-strategy which aids students in focusing attention on incoming messages, organising input, and in storing and retrieving information. In order for students to develop this macro-strategy several other strategies can be combined. Following Oxford's taxonomy (1990), some examples are given below:

Memory strategies: Associating/Elaborating, Using Imagery, Semantic Mapping

Cognitive Strategies: Getting the Idea Quickly, Highlighting, Summarising

Compensation Strategies: Using Linguistic Clues, Using Non-linguistic Clues, Getting Help

Metacognitive Strategies: Overviewing and Linking with Already Known Material, Paying Attention, Self-monitoring, Self-evaluating

Affective Strategies: Using Progressive Relaxation and Deep Breathing, Making Positive Statements, Taking Risk wisely

Social Strategies: Asking for Clarification, Cooperating with Peers.

A distinction is sometimes made between note-taking and note-making. Note-taking is the straightforward writing down of whatever is said or written on a board, etc. It may not require much thought. Note-making on the other hand, is the elaboration of your own notes, which may involve summarising, paraphrasing, putting question marks against some items (to query, check or comment on a later stage), and making important elements stand out by visual means (Jordan, 1997:187). On practical grounds, the more generally used term note-taking will be used here, though note-making is the intention of this study.

The importance of note-taking in the lecture comprehension process has been observed by several researchers in Flowerdew (1994). For instance, Chaudron et al. (in Flowerdew, 1994:75-6) argues that despite the common practice of encouraging L2 learners in academic settings to take lecture notes, little research has been conducted to evaluate the extent to which doing so aids L2 learners' comprehension, or to determine the characteristics of good notes.

Most methodological prescriptions on lecture note-taking are premised on two assumptions (ibid:76-7). The first assumption is that note-taking aids in organising lecture content while

listening. The second, that note-taking is a useful record for later recall and reconstruction of lecture content when studying:

First, note-taking aids the encoding process by increasing:

1. meaningful chunking and thereby encoding of information,
2. general level of attention,
3. general effort, and
4. assimilation of new and old information.

Second, note-taking provides an external storage of information:

1. it helps rehearsal (effort to remember), and
2. it provides mnemonics and information for reconstruction of memory.

Rost (1990, cited in Jordan 1997:187-8) provides a list of types of note-taking:

Topic-relation notes:

1. Topicalising – writing down a word or phrase to represent a section of the text
2. Translating – writing down L1 equivalent of topic
3. Copying – writing down verbatim what the lecturer has written on the blackboard (overhead projector, etc.)
4. Transcribing – writing down verbatim what the lecturer has said
5. Schematising – inserting graphics (e.g. diagram) to organise or represent a topic or relationship.

Concept-ordering notes:

1. Sequence cuing – listing topics in order, numbering
2. Hierarchy cuing – labelling notes as main points (key finding, conclusion, etc.) or examples (quote, anecdote, etc.)
3. Relation ordering – left-to-right indenting, using arrows, dashes, semi-circles, or = signs to indicate relation among topics.

Focusing notes:

1. Highlighting – underlining, placing a dot or arrow in front of a topic, circling a topic word
2. De-highlighting – writing in smaller letters or placing topic inside parentheses

Revising notes:

1. Inserting – drawing arrow back to earlier note, inserting with caret
2. Erasing – crossing out old note.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Jordan (1997:189) suggests some techniques to help students develop note-taking skills. For the purpose of organisation, it is useful to supply the overall framework or structure of a talk. In the early stages, and at lower language levels, it may be necessary for students to write verbatim. Once they have increased their ability and confidence, they can try to paraphrase as they listen and write. The provision of a table or chart which must be completed while listening to a recorded message has proved useful in helping students to transfer information from oral to written form.

There are many different ways to take notes, the simplest and most common form being that of raw notes, which are unstructured and untransformed. Another very common practice is to use the linear system, involving the vertical listing of items and points. Although a linear system may be perfectly satisfactory, it is useful for students to be aware of alternative systems to be able to choose the note-taking formats which they like best or suit the listening purpose (ibid).

Alternatives come in the form of some kinds of diagrams, such as the "shopping list", T-formation, columns, word map, outline or any other types of layouts. The advantage of using one of these formats is that they help organise what students hear while they are hearing, thus increasing the original understanding and the ability to integrate new information with old (Oxford, 1990:86).

Note-taking systems can often be improved by using numbers and letters to separate sections and sub-sections, and space and indentations for the layout. In addition, highlighting the notes by means of capital letters, underlining, as well as boxing and colour can increase the impact and it will be easier to remember (Jordan, 1997:189). The use of symbols and abbreviations is very important in note-taking as they allow students to write faster and consequently to process and record greater amount of information.

ASSESSING LISTENING

Developing valid and reliable listening tests is a complex process. This is because the processes of listening are hidden from the tester, and so the ways to measure the ability to handle spoken text are more demanding.

(Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:209)

The product of listening comprehension is a construction or representation of meaning in the mind, and there need to be any external evidence that the listener has understood. Test administrators have to give test-takers a task to complete and then make inferences about the degree of comprehension from performance on the task (Buck, 2001:99).

When we design a test, we do it for a particular purpose and for a specific set of test-takers, and these form the starting point for test development. The first step is defining the construct¹². This is a two-stage process: firstly, we define it on a theoretical level, and then secondly, we operationalise that through the texts we select and the tasks we ask our listeners to perform. The conceptualisation of our listening construct will be based on both our theoretical understanding of listening comprehension, and from our knowledge of the target-language use situation. The operationalisation of the construct will be based on our knowledge and experience as test-developers. It is important to get the construct right, both theoretically and operationally, because the construct is what our test is measuring, and this determines what our scores mean (ibid:94-5).

WHAT TO TEST

The type of listening test used will very much depend on the overall type of tests being administered. There are proficiency, placement, diagnostic and achievement tests. In proficiency and placement tests, the focus is on trying to discover what the learners know about the language in order to determine which students to admit to specific courses.

A diagnostic test acts like a needs analysis. The learners demonstrate what they can already do, and then the course designer develops material to raise their proficiency to the next level. An achievement test aims to measure what the learners know after a course of instruction (i.e. how much learning has been achieved).

¹² Constructs are unobservable qualities which are assumed to underlie observable behaviour (Nunan, 1992:47).

Both achievement and diagnostic tests are criterion-referenced. A criterion-referenced test means that learners are assessed on a pre-agreed standard. They must reach a certain level of standard in order to pass the test. The learner's test score is interpreted with respect to the set criteria and is not measured against the scores of other students. Achievement and diagnostic tests usually take place within existing language programs. Therefore, the teacher should use types of test tasks that the learners have been exposed to during the course. It would not be appropriate to use certain types of tasks in the teaching of the course and then use completely different types of tasks in the tests (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:202-3).

WHAT TO MEASURE

A test is a measurement, and thus it must bear two properties: *validity* and *reliability*. Test validity refers to whether the test appears to test what it is intended to test (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Types of test Validity. *Source:* Adapted from Flowerdew & Miller (2005: 206).

| Type of validity | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Face validity | Test content and form should be derived directly from classroom material and tasks, or made from texts and tasks that are parallel to classroom materials (Rost, 2002:169). |
| Content validity | This refers to the degree to which the test actually measures the language it is intended to measure. With achievement and diagnostic tests, the test items must be in the course content. |
| Construct validity | It is the extent to which the test measures the right construct (Buck, 2001:195) |
| Empirical validity | Empirical validity is the relationship of the test results to some other form of measurement, such as other valid test scores. In this way if test scores match some other criteria for measurement, the test is considered empirically valid. |

Reliability refers to the consistency of the test. In other words, it is concerned with how accurately the test measures. Conceptually, this is the idea that we would always get the same result testing the same person in the same situation (Buck, 2001:195).

PLAYING THE RECORDING MORE THAN ONCE

Another problematic testing issue is how many times listeners should listen to the text. In many listening tests, test takers are allowed to hear the text twice. Playing the text a second time will make the test task much easier especially for lower-ability test-takers. However, in terms of both the situational and interactional authenticity of the language, playing the text just once seems the obvious thing to do. In virtually all really-world situations we hear the text once, and only once, and fast, automatic processing of language is a basic listening ability that we need to test. If listeners fail to catch something, this is what happens in most target-language use situations, and the ability to make inferences to bridge comprehension gaps is a fundamentally important listening skill.

The problem is that in most target-language use situations it is not so vital that the listener understand exactly what is said and comprehension is normally much more approximate than we realise. When it is important that we understand precisely, we often have a chance to ask clarification questions and negotiate the meaning in some ways. The testing situation is unnatural in demanding that the listener comprehend with a much greater degree of precision than is normal. In other words, in preserving the situational authenticity by giving the text only once, we are sacrificing interactional authenticity by asking listeners to understand more precisely than in the target-language use situation. Thus, playing the text a second time does not appear such an unnatural thing to do. Furthermore, in many testing situations there is a room full of people, possible with inadequate sound quality, and there is always a chance of some noise disturbing the listener just at exactly the wrong moment. Others will argue that playing the recording only once places an undue psychological stress on the test-taker. When making decisions on this issue, test-developers need to take into account the construct they want to measure, the characteristics of the testing situation, and the quality of the audio the test-takers will hear (Buck, 2001:171-2).

HOW TO ASSESS LISTENING

There are many ways to mark tests: percentages points, number scales, grade points, descriptors and performance criteria (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Scales used for measuring listening. Source: Flowerdew & Miller (2005: 208).

| Percentage scale | Number Scale | Grade Points | Limited Description Scale |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 0 | 0 | F | Non-scorable |
| 10 | 1 | E | Limited |
| 20 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 40 | 2 | D | Adequate |
| 50 | | | |
| 60 | 3 | C | Good |
| 70 | | | |
| 80 | 4 | B | Very Good |
| 90 | | | |
| 100 | 5 | A | Excellent |

For the purpose of this study, informed decision was made in favour of rating students' achievement utilising a percentage scale because it was the researcher's assumption that a percentage scale would measure more accurately students' proficiency in the pre- and post-tests (test reliability). However, in order for the results to have empirical validity, they were interpreted utilising the Limited Description Scale (ibid).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

DESIGN

CLASSROOM RESEARCH

The key task for classroom researchers is to identify, describe and relate, in intersubjective terms, actions and contributions of participants in the L2 classroom, in such a way that their significance for language learning can be understood.

(Lier, 1988 cited in Nunan 1992:103).

Nunan (1992:91-4) draws attention to the fact that very few classroom-oriented investigations usually take place in genuine classrooms. By genuine he means "classrooms which have been specifically constituted for teaching purposes, not for the purpose of collecting data for research". As a result, many are the intervening variables affecting the learning process which render research control extremely difficult to achieve in most classroom settings. Language classrooms are complicated places to carry out formal experiments¹³ in order to establish a relationship between the dependent variable of language proficiency and independent variables such as innovative methods and materials.

In this research context there were many constraints for developing a true or quasi- experiment. To begin with, the Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking was meant to be direct and integrated into the current language programme, so it was aimed at training the whole class in listening strategies. Secondly, although the students of the second level at FI-UNaM were distributed into two sections, the group who did not receive strategy instruction

¹³ Experimental design types:

Formal or true experiment has both pre- and post-tests, experimental and control groups, and random assignment of subjects.

Quasi-experiment has both pre- and post-tests and experimental and control groups, but no random assignment of subjects.

Pre-experiment or non-experiment may have pre- and post-tests, but lacks a control group (Nunan, 1992:41).

could not be tested in this skill because their course credits might be negatively affected by the test results, and in real life this is extremely unfair. Besides, teachers should not test what they have not taught, a test should bear face validity – test content and form should be derived directly from classroom material and tasks (Rost, 2002:169). Consequently, there was no room for true or quasi-experimental designs in this study, and a non-experimental design was chosen to collect data in order to identify the effects of language learning strategies (LLS) instruction on students.

A non-experimental design is one in which a researcher measures a group on a dependent variable and then, introduces an experimental manipulation (an independent variable). Following the experimental treatment, the researcher measures again the dependent variable and proceeds to account for differences between pre-test and post-test scores by reference to the effects of the independent variable (Cohen & Manion, 1994:165).

Regarding this study, the researcher measured a group of university students of English as an FL on academic listening and then introduced strategy instruction on listening and note-taking. Following the training programme, the researcher measured again academic listening and proceeded to account for differences between pre-test and post-test scores by reference to the effects of the strategy instruction.

In the case of non-experimental designs, extraneous variables which are outside the researcher's control threaten to invalidate the results (ibid:166). They are different in nature, and may threaten the reliability and validity¹⁴ of the research. Instances of extraneous variables which might have affected the STP were:

- *History*: Events other than the experimental treatments occur during the time between pre-test and post-test observations. Such events produce effects that can be mistakenly attributed to differences in treatment.
- *Maturation*: Between any two observations subjects change in a variety of ways. Such events produce differences that are independent of the experimental treatments.
- *Instrumentation*: Unreliable tests or instruments can introduce serious error into experiments (e.g. leading questions).

The fundamental purpose of experimental designs is to impose control over conditions that would otherwise blur the true effects of the independent variables upon the dependent variables

¹⁴ Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research. Validity has to do with the extent to which a piece of research actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate (Nunan, 1992:14).

(Cohen & Manion, 1994:170). In order to strengthen the reliability and validity of the research, data were also collected from sources other than the test scores. They were also collected by means of elicitation procedures with the purpose of using triangular techniques which could explain more fully the richness and complexity of the phenomenon under investigation by studying it from more than one viewpoint (ibid:233).

SUBJECTS

The subjects in this study were thirty-one students of English as a foreign language at the second level in a university setting in Argentina (see Figure 1.3). They were senior undergraduate students from four different engineering programmes at our College, attending their first semester in 2007. In spite of the fact that there were around fifty students at the beginning of the STP, only thirty-one students could complete the training programme due to dropouts which is a common practice within the university population.



Figure 3.1 Subjects and participant researcher on the post-test day.

Their level of proficiency at the beginning of the STP, according to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (2003), was assumed to correspond to CLB levels 3/4 for speaking and listening skills:

Simple structure is mastered at this level. Messages are short and are limited to very basic, daily routine situations. There are frequent errors and often a need for clarification and repetition. Can read and write very short simple texts with recognisable spelling and punctuation. Vocabulary is quite limited.

CLB levels 7/8 for reading skills:

Learners have mastered the more complex grammatical structures and have expanded vocabulary to speak and write on a wide variety of everyday topics. They can identify levels of formality and adjust their language to familiar situations. They can offer opinions and advice properly. They can read texts of up to 10 pages on familiar topics or follow complex instructions. They are beginning to use language for academic purposes.

CLB 5/6 for writing skills:

At this point, the second language learner can handle familiar, everyday situations in the community or at the workplace. They are able to ask for explanations, clarify their meaning, listen to short talks or read about a variety of subjects. Errors in pronunciation, grammar, spelling and punctuation may cause misunderstanding at times.

Those assumptions were made on the level of proficiency they had to reach to be able to pass the first level of English at the university.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was a longitudinal study of thirty-nine hours, distributed along thirteen weeks, with a learning styles questionnaire, a pre-test, a strategy training program (STP) and a post test, followed by a survey and a few interviews.

STUDENTS' NOTES

For the purpose of pedagogy, an activity book was written which was known as "Students' Notes". According to Oxford (1994), "Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study". Accordingly, the instructional material was designed. The subjects got it for free on the first session of the STP because the researcher wanted to be sure that every learner had the material to work with, so that the strategy instruction could be carried out as scheduled.

First, a review on the literature was done. Second, textbooks for academic listening were surveyed. Third, listening strategies were identified, and finally, the content of the textbook

Academic Listening Encounters: Life in Society (2004) used in the regular lessons, was tailored to fit into the intended scheme. The topics tackled were *Information Technology* and *Urbanisation Issues*. The format chosen was taken from *Study Listening: A course in listening to lectures and note-taking* (2004) (second edition). The content of the notes was enhanced by *Study Skills in English* (2004) (second edition), by Oxford's *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (1990), by Flowerdew & Miller's *Second Language Listening: Theory and Practice* (2005) and by Reid's *Learning Styles in the ESL/EFL Classroom* (1995).

As a result, each lesson involved (see Appendix 1):

- Focusing on strategies which would be practised in the lesson;
- Setting objectives for the lesson;
- Pre-listening (building background knowledge);
- First listening (guided note-taking for main ideas);
- Second listening (detailed note-taking);
- After-listening (pair work: comparing notes: content and format);
- Follow-up (e.g. personalising the topic, troubleshooting);
- Whole-class discussion of strategy use.

The Notes consisted of eleven lessons and each lesson was delivered in a three-hour class. The strategies developed and the objectives sought in each lesson are presented below. As can be seen, each lesson consisted of groups of five or six strategies which were recombined in following lessons to promote practice which hopefully would lead to automaticity.

1. An Overview

a) Strategies:

- Finding out about LLS
- Identifying the purpose of the LLS training programme
- Setting goals and objectives
- Organising and planning for task
- Making positive statements

b) Objectives:

- To learn what the strategy-training programme (STP) consists of
- To find out about one's own learning style

2. Note-taking Techniques

a) Strategies:

- Creating structure for input

- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To write notes faster and more efficiently
- To organise the spoken information in an effective way
- To compare one's performance with others'

3. Lecture Internal Structure

a) Strategies:

- Creating structure for input
- Analysing expressions
- Paying attention
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To identify discourse markers
- To identify lecture organisation

4. Listening to Interviews

a) Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Transferring
- Getting the idea quickly
- Cooperating with peers
- Becoming aware of others' thought and feelings

b) Objectives:

- To distinguish features that correspond to an interview
- To develop skills that help record information from an interview

5. Building Background Knowledge on the Topic

a) Strategies:

- Organising
- Planning for language task
- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Using non-linguistic clues
- Grouping
- Semantic mapping
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objective:

- To use world knowledge to understand lectures

6. Predicting

a) Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Taking risks wisely
- Summarising
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To use world knowledge to understand information
- To guess vocabulary from context
- To notice prosodic features to assist in understanding speech
- To use one's notes to answer questions
- To summarise what you have heard

7. Monitoring

a) Strategies:

- Paying attention
- Getting the idea quickly
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To guess vocabulary from context
- To draw inferences
- To recognise discourse markers functions

8. Responding

a) Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Reasoning deductively
- Taking risks wisely
- Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings
- Cooperating with peers
- Discussing your feelings with someone else

b) Objectives:

- To think critically about what has been said
- To give one's own opinions on a topic

9. Clarifying

a) Strategies:

- Paying attention
- Using resources
- Self-monitoring
- Asking for clarification or verification
- Cooperating with peers
- Cooperating with proficient users of the target language

b) Objectives:

- To ask for help
- To use different resources to get information
- To increase one's knowledge on a topic

10. Inferencing

a) Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Guessing intelligently
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Transferring
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To overcome knowledge limitation of the target language
- To understand a lot of language through systematic guessing

11. Evaluating

a) Strategies:

- Inferencing
- Self-monitoring
- Cooperating with peers

b) Objectives:

- To gauge one's progress in listening skills
- To gauge one's progress in note-taking.

Description of the Strategies Found in the Students' Notes

Twenty-eight LLS were selected to make up the STP, twelve direct strategies and sixteen indirect strategies. The former group consisted of two memory strategies, eight cognitive strategies, and two compensation strategies. The latter group was made up of nine metacognitive strategies, four social strategies and three affective strategies. An account of these LLS is given below. For purpose of clarity they are sketched in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 An outline of the strategies presented in the STP. *Source:* Oxford (1990).

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| D I R E C T S T R A T E G I E S | Memory Strategies | Creating mental linkage | Grouping |
| | | Applying images and sounds | Semantic mapping |
| | Cognitive Strategies | Receiving & sending messages | Getting the idea quickly Using resources |
| | | Analysing and reasoning | Reasoning deductively Analysing expressions Transferring |
| | | Creating Structure for input | Taking notes summarising highlighting |
| | Compensation Strategies | Guessing intelligently | Using linguistic clues Using other clues |
| I N D I R E C T S T R A T E G I E S | Metacognitive Strategies | Centring your learning | Overviewing & linking with already known material Paying Attention |
| | | Arranging & planning your learning | Finding out about language learning Organising Setting goals & objectives Identifying the purpose of a language task Planning for language task |
| | | Evaluating your learning | Self-monitoring Self-evaluating |
| | Social Strategies | Asking questions | Asking for clarification or verification |
| | | Cooperating with others | Cooperating with peers Cooperating with proficient users of the new language |
| | | Empathising with others | Becoming aware of others' thoughts & feelings |
| | Affective Strategies | Encouraging yourself | Making positive statements Taking risks wisely |
| | | Taking your emotional temperature | Discussing your feelings with someone else |

DIRECT STRATEGIES

Memory Strategies:

1. Creating Mental Linkages:
 - a) Grouping involves classifying and reclassifying what is heard into meaning groups, thus reducing the number of unrelated elements.
2. Applying Images and Sounds is very useful for remembering new expressions.
 - a) Semantic Mapping involves arranging concepts and relationships in a diagram hierarchically by means of arrows or lines. It is very helpful for comprehension.

Cognitive Strategies

1. Receiving and Sending messages
 - a) Getting the Idea Quickly helps learners direct their effort or attention to what they need or want to understand, and it allows them to disregard the rest or use it as background information only.
 - b) Using Resources: This strategy involves using additional material to find out the meaning of what is heard. Resources may be printed such as a dictionary or grammar textbook, or non-printed such as TV, or music.
2. Analysing and Reasoning
 - a) Reasoning Deductively involves deriving hypotheses about the meaning of what is heard by means of general rules which the learner already knows.
 - b) Analysing Expressions means determining the meaning of a new expression by breaking it down into parts; using the meanings of various parts to understand the meaning of the whole expression.
 - c) Transferring means directly applying previous knowledge to facilitate new knowledge in the target language. Transferring can involve applying linguistic knowledge from the learner's own language to the new language, linguistic knowledge from one aspect of the new language to another aspect of the new language, or conceptual knowledge from one field to another.
3. Creating Structure for Input and Output: There are three strategies in this group – taking notes, summarising and highlighting. They help learners sort and organise the TL information that come their way. In addition, these strategies allow students to demonstrate their understanding tangibly and prepare them for using the language for speaking and writing.

- a) Taking Notes means writing down the main or specific points. This strategy can involve raw notes, or it can comprise a more systematic form of note-taking such as the shopping-list format, the T-formation, the semantic map, or the standard outline form.
- b) Highlighting implies using a variety of emphasis techniques (such as underlining, starring, or colour-coding) to focus on important information in a passage.
- c) Summarising helps learners structure new input and show that they understand. Summarising means making a condensed, shorter version of the original passage.

Compensation Strategies

1. Guessing Intelligently helps learners let go of the belief that they have to recognise and understand every single word before they can comprehend the overall meaning. Learners can actually understand a lot of language through systematic guessing, without necessarily comprehending all the details. A more academic word for this strategy is Inferencing. Two compensation strategies relevant to listening involve using linguistic clues and other clues.
 - a) Using Linguistic Clues: Previously gained knowledge of the target language, the learner's own language, or some other language can provide linguistic clues to the meaning of what is heard. Suffixes, prefixes, and word order are useful linguistic clues for guessing meanings.
 - b) Using Non-linguistic Clues: Clues coming from other sources, such as context and knowledge of how the world works (scripts and schemata) help learners interpret what they hear.

INDIRECT STRATEGIES

Metacognitive Strategies

1. Centring Your Learning: This set of strategies helps learners to converge their attention and energies on certain language tasks, activities, skills, or materials. Use of these strategies provides a focus for language learning
 - a) Overviewing and Linking with Already Known Material means previewing the basic principles and/or material for an upcoming activity, and linking these with what the learner already knows. This strategy can be accomplished in many different ways, but

it is often helpful to follow three steps: learning why the activity is being done, building the needed vocabulary, and making associations.

- b) Paying Attention involves two modes, directed attention and selective attention. Directed attention means deciding generally and globally to pay attention to the task and avoid irrelevant distractors. In contrast, selective attention involves deciding in advance to notice particular details.
2. Arranging and Planning Your Learning helps learners to organise and plan so as to get the most out of language learning.
- a) Finding Out About Language Learning means uncovering what is involved in language learning.
 - b) Organising means understanding and using conditions related to optimal learning of the new language, organising one's schedule, and creating the best physical environment for learning.
 - c) Setting Goals and Objectives: Goals and Objectives are expression of Students' aims for language learning. Goals are generally considered long-term; whereas objectives are short-term.
 - d) Identifying the Purpose of a Language Task involves determining the task purpose.
 - e) Planning for Language Task means identifying the general nature of the task, the specific requirement of the task, the resources available within the learner, and the need for further aids.
3. Evaluating your learning: In this set there are two related strategies, both aiding learners in checking their language performance. One strategy involves noticing and learning from errors, and the other concerns overall progress.
- a) Self-Monitoring means identifying errors in understanding or producing the new language, determining which ones are important errors, tracking the source of them, and trying to eliminate such errors.
 - b) Self-evaluating involves gauging either general language progress or progress in any of the four skills. Listeners, for instance, can check whether what they have understood is really accurate, they can estimate what percentage of a message has been understood. They can assess whether they are at the stage of listening comprehension they expected or wanted to be at that time. Students can consider whether their listening has improved since last week, last month, based on what they understand.

Social Strategies

1. Asking Questions

- a) Asking for Clarification or Verification involves asking a more proficient language user for help.

2. Cooperating with Others: This set of two strategies involves interacting with one or more people to improve language skills. These strategies are the basis of cooperative language learner, which not only increases learner's language performance but also enhances self-worth and social acceptance.

- a) Cooperating with Peers involves a concerted effort to work together with other learners on an activity with a common goal or reward.
- b) Cooperating with Proficient Users of the New Language involves taking specific steps to enhance communication with a proficient user of the TL.

3. Empathising with Others

- a) Becoming Aware of Others' Thoughts and Feelings: Learners can purposefully become aware of fluctuations in the thoughts and feelings of particular people who use the TL. Such awareness brings learners closer to the people they encounter, helps them understand more clearly what is communicated, and suggests what to say and do. Listening carefully to what is said, and what is left unsaid, enables learners to become more aware of other people's mindset.

Affective Strategies

1. Encouraging yourself: These set of strategies is often forgotten by learners, specially those who expect encouragement mainly from other people and do not realise that the most potent encouragement may come from inside the learner.

- a) Making Positive Statements means saying or writing statements to oneself in order to feel more confident in learning the new language.
- b) Taking Risks Wisely involves a conscious decision to take reasonable risks regardless of the possibility of making mistakes or encountering difficulties. It also suggests the need to carry out this decision in action – that is, employing direct strategies to use the language despite fear or failure. Risk-taking must be tempered by good judgment.

2. Taking Your Emotional Temperature

- a) Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else: Language learning is difficult, and learners often need to discuss this process with other people. Students can benefit

from discussing their feelings with peers and teacher. Teacher should encourage students to express their feelings about the language learning process and discover what they need to be better learners.

LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

A simple learning styles questionnaire (Nunan, 1996 cited in Flowerdew & Miller 2005:66-7) with closed items¹⁵ was chosen and adapted to suit the current technology (see Appendix 2). The quiz was administered on the first session of the STP. In this questionnaire, students were required to score each of the statements and find out which type of learner they were. Four types of learners were presented. Types 1 and 3 were probably learners who were more inclined to use top-down approaches in their learning, whereas types 2 and 4 indicated learners who probably used more bottom-up approaches to language learning. Any combination of the scores which covered more than one type, possibly indicated students who liked to use an interactive approach to learning (Ibid:65).

In order to suit the students' different learning styles, the activities in the students' notes were diverse in nature, so that everybody could feel competent, and at the same time experiment with new challenging academic tasks which could be solved through appropriate strategies. One of the characteristics which 'good' language learners share is a flexible approach to learning, tailored to the requirements of the language task.

If we consciously introduce material through a number of modalities with strategies that reflect both relational and analytical processing, we can prompt the development of flexibility.

Kinsella (in Reid 1995:190)

In order to analyse and present the data gathered in the learning styles questionnaire, descriptive statistics was used. Descriptive statistics allows researchers to organise, summarise, tabulate and describe a group of scores for a particular group of individuals (Bachman, 2004:33)¹⁶.

¹⁵ A closed item is one in which the range of possible responses is determined by the researcher (Nunan, 1992:143).

¹⁶ Descriptive statistics will be further discussed in this chapter.

PRE-TEST

A diagnostic test was administered on the second session of the STP to assess the students' initial level of proficiency in listening and note-taking. First, the students engaged in pre-listening activities to revise some grammar points and vocabulary that would be heard in the recording. These activities helped learners activate prior knowledge and make predictions about the content of the text they would hear (see Appendix 3).

Next, the students did their test by taking notes of the spoken text. An interview "Changes in a Town" was chosen from *Fast Track to FCE – Coursebook: Audiotape unit 4* (2001:108). It was a four-minute recording (see Appendix 3). The interview was played twice on a SONY MHC-GNX700.

Layout

A note-frame was provided with four items for them to fill in with the information they could process: 1) physical features; 2) People's lifestyle; 3) Traffic; and 4) Environment (see Appendix 3).

Test Rating

The pre-test content was analysed and grouped into 1) main ideas; 2) supporting ideas; 3) details; and 4) nuances, and a template outline was produced (concept-ordering notes) (see Appendix 3). Students' performance was rated according to the amount of the different types of information provided in the test. An interval scale¹⁷ was used for the purpose; a percentage was obtained between the highest possible score and what each student actually got.

In order to interpret and report pre-test scores, descriptive statistical analyses and inferential statistical analyses were conducted. The procedures will be thoroughly explained in the post-test section of this chapter.

¹⁷ An interval scale provides information on the rankings of scores as well as on the distance between the scores (Nunan, 1992:25).

LEARNING PROCESS

Instruction in LLS was the core of the intervention study. It took the longest period assigned to the STP (eleven lessons). The students and the teacher, who also acted as participant researcher, worked together in a concerted effort to reach the established objectives. Although the researcher was warned against telling the subjects they were participating in a research for fear that the result of the investigation were biased by the pleasure of being included in the study¹⁸, in the course of time the learners found out about their role. As a result, the students felt more motivated to improve their knowledge and skills in order to solve the language tasks which were presented to them. Thus, learning about the classroom research acted as a motivational strategy which encouraged the learners to pursue the STP goals further.

Dörnyei's process-oriented model of motivational teaching practice was welcomed to generate, and maintain motivation in the classroom (2001a). Accordingly, a few suggestions were followed:

- The basic motivational conditions were created in the classroom by:

Presenting good quality instructional material: The Students' Notes were carefully planned, written, and presented. Attempts were made to tailor the material to the students' needs so that the learners could feel that they were experiencing meaningful learning.

Demonstrating enthusiasm for the STP: The students were persuaded of the usefulness of learning LLS as a means to become better learners of English, utilising their time and resources more effectively.

Developing a friendly relationship with the students: A pleasant and supportive learning atmosphere was created by helping the learners overcome the difficulties they encountered in the learning process and by promoting cooperative work among the students. A strategy used by the teacher was to learn their first name and use it when they were addressed. This strategy was useful to show students that they were cared for and were considered as individual human beings (one's name is music to one's ears).

Having sufficiently high expectation for what the learners could achieve: At first, it was believed that if goals were set high, the students could approximate the established goals, but then teacher expectations increased and students' performance progressed accordingly.

- Initial motivation was generated by

Raising the learner's intrinsic interest in the L2 learning process: One of the reasons why the Learning Styles Questionnaire was administered was to engage students in the STP.

¹⁸ This phenomenon is called the Hawthorne effect (Brown, 1988:32).

Another common practice to raise their interest was to talk about the strategies they were able to use when doing the tasks, and about the ways to improve the use of them.

Increasing the students' expectancy of academic success: Steps were taken in order to see that the students received sufficient preparation and assistance. Furthermore, obstacles to success were foreseen and attempts to minimise them were made, for instance by grading tasks according to difficulty, or providing the adequate strategies to carry out the activities.

- Motivation was maintained and protected by

Presenting challenging tasks: Listening and note-taking tasks were very demanding for the students because they involved the development of multiple skills which called for the use of numerous strategies in their accomplishment. Previous research (e.g. Chamot, 2001) concluded that students used LLS only if tasks were difficult to accomplish in the regular manner, and as a result they had to find alternative ways of solving them.

Providing appropriate strategies to carry out the task: The LLS were presented, their value explained; then, they were modelled, and finally, the students were encouraged to use them. The LLS taught in every lesson were carefully planned and revised according the assumed learners' needs. Some other LLS were introduced if the students expressed the need for them. Such was the case for the presentation of the whole group of memory strategies because the learners claimed that learning vocabulary was very difficult for them. Other note-taking formats not provided in the Students' Notes were also taught to allow for a wider variety of formats. For instance, the standard outline format was explained and practised in class, and it became the students' preferred note-taking one. In other words, material was adapted to the students' needs and interest as the STP progressed.

Adjusting the difficulty level of tasks to students' ability: At the beginning of the STP, the listening material was presented as a single unit, but students found the recordings difficult to process. So, a decision was made to simplify the task by presenting input in short chunks, and to give opportunities for clarification before continuing. Adjustment was also made in the quantity and quality of stored information. First, they were asked to use simple note-taking formats without discriminating between main ideas, supporting ideas and details. Then, they were asked to give a hierarchical order to the ideas heard in the oral text. As time went by, they were able to produce better quality notes. Furthermore, by the mid of the STP, they were able to reconstruct the text orally from their resultant notes.

Removing or reducing the anxiety-provoking elements in the learning environment: Students were taught affective strategies to regulate their emotions and attitudes about learning, such as Making Positive Statements, Taking Risks wisely and Discussing your Feelings with Someone Else. These strategies together with an increasingly gained confidence

in language knowledge, and a friendly learning environment helped learners reduce language anxiety which might become a hindrance to improvement.

Promoting effort attributions in the students: The role of effort on learning achievement was emphasised, and the importance of ability played down. Low achievement was corresponded with low effort or inadequate use of strategies. Students were persuaded that there was no reason why the objectives established for the STP could not be attained to a reasonable extent through the combination of effort and strategies.

Promoting cooperation among learners: Cooperating with Peers was a strategy which was used along the STP. In the pre-listening activities, the students discussed topics in pairs, and expressed their opinions to the class. In this way they could collaboratively build background knowledge on the topic. In the after-listening activities, they compared their notes in pairs, and were allowed to complete their notes with any information their classmates succeeded to write down. And in most follow-up activities, they carried out some pair work, such as doing research or preparing an oral presentation. At the end of each lesson, there were whole-class discussions of the strategies used while doing the different tasks.

Promoting learner autonomy: Throughout the STP, Students took on increasing responsibility on their own learning process. They were able to choose who to work with, how to solve the tasks, what strategies to use, what note-taking format to present, and finally, they were able to evaluate their classmates' notes. The teacher progressively relinquished power and control, removed the scaffolding and became a mere observer of what was going on in the classroom. She acted as a facilitator in that she provided the material to work with, and offered the necessary instruction, but left students to find out the solution to the proposed problems by themselves.

POST-TEST

On the thirteenth session of the STP, the post-test was administered. It consisted in an achievement test. It aimed to measure what the students had learned through the STP. The resultant notes students were able to make were taken as a measure of the listening comprehension skills students developed by means of LLS in the STP.

The post-test session resembled previous lessons. It started with pre-listening activities, such as brainstorming and guessing the meaning of words in context which called for the use of the following strategies: predicting, inferencing, transferring, and cooperating with Peers. Metacognitive strategies were also prompted, such as overviewing and linking with already

known material, organising, identifying the purpose of the language task, and planning for the language task (see Appendix 4). The familiarity of the task aided in the creation of a pleasant and supportive atmosphere which prevented students from suffering from typical test-taking anxiety.

Next, the learners were provided with the mini-lecture internal structure to help them predict and organise the information they would encounter in the text (see Appendix 4). It was a four-minute recording "Problems of Urbanisation" (see Appendix 4) and it was played twice on a SONY MHC-GNX700. The subjects wrote down notes of the spoken text in their preferred format. The recording was segmented into meaningful chunks to allow for a break in their effort to concentrate. The division followed the natural pauses the lecturer did when changing topic.

Test Rating

For the purpose of scoring the post-test, the pre-test procedure was followed. A template outline was designed and the post-test content was analysed and grouped into 1) main ideas; 2) supporting ideas; 3) details; and 4) nuances (concept-ordering notes) (see Appendix 4). Students' performance was rated according to the amount of the different types of information provided in the test. An interval scale was used for the purpose; a percentage was obtained between the highest possible score and what each student actually got.

Using Statistics for Understanding and Interpreting Test Scores¹⁹

Because scores from many different individuals and from two different measures were dealt with in this work, it was necessary to summarise and describe this large amount of information in order to understand and interpret it. Statistics provided the tools for summarising and describing the scores obtained from the pre- and post-tests. In addition, statistics offered the tools to make inferences about the performance of a larger population, based on the performance of this particular group of individual (Bachman, 2004:32). In this study, descriptive statistical analyses and inferential statistical analyses were carried out²⁰, according to what type of information was intended from the data collected.

Descriptive Statistical analyses were conducted to provide succinct and clear descriptions of the students' performance on both tests. Central tendency and dispersion of the scores were

¹⁹ Statistical analyses were conducted with the aid of María Claudia Dekún, B.Sc., UNaM.

²⁰ Refer to Appendix 7 for definitions of statistics terms used in this study.

presented by means of graphic representations and descriptive statistics of the students' performance.

Descriptive statistics are calculated for two purposes. First, they provide a precise way to describe the characteristics of a score distribution. Second, they offer the basis for further statistical analyses for investigating relationships and differences among different score distributions, for estimating the reliability of the scores, and for interpreting scores in meaningful ways (ibid:42).

Inferential statistical analyses were carried out to compare and determine whether the differences between the pre- and post-test scores were statistically significant. Nonparametric tests were performed for differences in the medians. The Wilcoxon-signed-rank test and the Sign test were utilised for the purpose. Lastly, multiple regression and correlational analyses were conducted in order to identify the influence which the different parts of the test had on the total scores achieved on both occasions. In this way, more detailed information about the subjects' achievement was obtained.

SURVEY

On the same day of the post-test, a survey was administered to get the subjects' impressions on the STP. Surveys are relatively easier and faster to administer to a considerably large population, and the collected data are more amenable to quantification than discursive data. However, the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires is a complex task which needs expertise, to be able to measure what they are intended to measure (Nunan, 1992:143).

When constructing questionnaire items, it is important, first of all, to be clear about the objectives of the study, and each item should be directly referenced against one or more of the research objectives.

(Nunan, 1992:145)

Following Nunan's advice (ibid), the objectives for assessing the students' affective reactions to the STP were set and, later, rephrased as statements for the students to rate. The survey used a five-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire consisted of nine close items (see Appendix 5). The objectives pursued with each item were as follows:

- Item 1: to enquire about students' previous note-taking practice

- Item 2: to assess the level of note-taking ability students achieved in the STP
- Item 3: to find out students' first impression on task difficulty
- Item 4: to assess students' sense of achievement in the STP
- Item 5: to check students' awareness of FL learning process
- Item 6: to evaluate how the STP could lead to motivation to learn the TL
- Item 7: to inquire into the students' beliefs about the utility of note-taking
- Item 8: to assess the impact of the STP on language improvement
- Item 9: to ask users of the STP about its learning value.

Descriptive statistics was used to deal with the data obtained in the survey. A graph was plotted with the average scores of each item to visualise group behaviour. Then, interpretation of the results was provided to try to make sense of the choices.

INTERVIEWS

The purpose of interviewing the subjects was an interest in understanding their experience and the meaning they made of that experience (Seidman, 1998:3). Purposive sampling²¹ criteria were taken to select the participants for the interviews. Three learners, out of thirty-one were asked to speak about their experience in the STP. One student was chosen because he was re-attending the subject (*Taller de Inglés 2*). It was thought he could compare the former method used for learning listening skills against the current one. The second interviewee was selected because he used a cognitive strategy, namely, translating: using one language (L1) as the basis for understanding or producing another (L2) (Oxford, 1990:46), in spite of the fact that this strategy was not included in the STP. Nevertheless, he was able to store a great deal of information, together with some comments of the metacognitive process he went through while doing the task. Finally, a third participant was randomly chosen to represent the population as a whole. The researcher posted a notice asking for a volunteer, nobody turned up, so she asked one student she met by chance, but he recommended another classmate, and this last student agreed to be interviewed.

The interviews were carried out individually two weeks after the post-test (retrospective technique). The overall structure was the same for the three of them, although, a few questions were added for the first and second participants due to their particular situations. It was a

²¹ In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality (Cohen & Manion, 1994:89).

structured interview in that the agenda was totally predetermined by the researcher, who worked through a list of set questions in a predetermined order (Nunan, 1992:149).

In order to design the interview, Seidman's proposal for in-depth, phenomenological interviewing (1998) was followed, although the interviews were carried out in a single session, not in three separate interviews with each participant, as suggested by the author. The first part of the interview established the context of the participants' past experience in learning the TL, in listening and in note-taking (three questions). The second part consisted in eliciting their experience within the context of the STP (two questions). The third and last part encouraged the participants to reflect on the implications which the STP had had for them (two questions) (see Appendix 6).

The interviews varied in length. Students 1 and 3 spoke for about thirty minutes, whereas Student 2 spoke for about an hour. The interviews were carried out in the L1 so that the participants would feel more at ease and they would not be constrained by limited L2 knowledge. "The search for the words in English in all three participants could have masked their inner thought" (Vygotsky, 1986 cited in Mayol 2000:10).

The interviews were taped and transcribed. Then, an interpretative approach was used to analyse the material which resulted from the interviews.

After the interviews, the researcher rereads the transcripts, marks with brackets the passages that are interesting. At this stage, the researcher exercises judgement about what is significant in the transcripts, trusts herself as a reader.

(Mayol, 2000:12)

An inductive approach should be used when reducing the data. The researcher cannot address the material with a set of hypotheses to test. He approaches the transcripts with an open attitude, discovering what emerges as important and of interest in the text. What a researcher brings to the data is his sense of what is important as he reads the transcripts (Seidman, 1998:99-100).

CHAPTER 4

Results Obtained from the Strategy-training Programme

LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Figure 4.1 represents the results obtained from the learning styles questionnaire administered to the subjects on the first day of the STP (adapted from Nunan, 1996 cited in Flowerdew & Miller 2005).

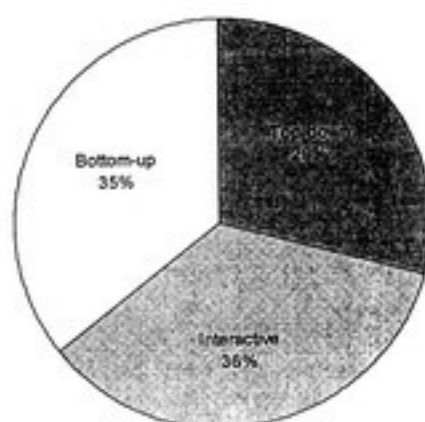


Figure 4.1 Graphic representation of the subjects' learning styles. Source: Original.

An interactive approach, that is, a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches, was the preferred style chosen by the subjects. An almost equal number of the subjects opted for the bottom-up approach, i.e. field-independent style. Finally, a smaller percentage of students favoured a top-down approach, i.e. field-sensitive style, to language learning.

TEST SCORES²²

First, descriptive statistics was used to analyse the behaviour of pre- and post-test scores in order to determine whether there were differences between both sets of scores, the pre- and post-test scores. A graphic representation of the subjects' performance in the pre- and post tests is presented below (see Figure 4.2).

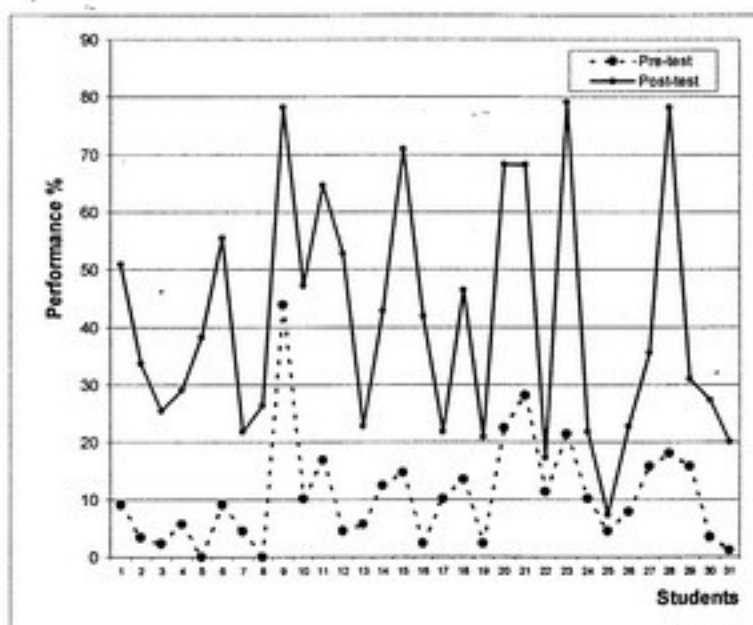


Figure 4.2 Graphic representation of students' performance in the pre- and post-tests. *Source:* Original.

As observed in the graph, the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores; namely, the subjects improved their performance after the strategy instruction.

Table 4.1 shows useful data of the pre- and post-test results. As can be seen, better values are displayed in the post-test column, which leads to the assumption that the subjects managed to progress in their language knowledge and skills by means of the strategy instruction.

²² Refer to Appendix 7 for definitions of statistics terms used in this study.

Table 4.1 Pre- and post-test summary of descriptive statistics. *Source: Original*

| | | TotalPreT | TotalPostT |
|----------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| N | Valid | 31 | 31 |
| Mean | | 10,6 | 40,8 |
| Median | | 8,9 | 35,4 |
| Mode | | 2,2(a) | 21,8 |
| Std. Deviation | | 9,4 | 20,8 |
| Range | | 43,8 | 71,8 |
| Minimum | | 0,0 | 7,3 |
| Maximum | | 43,8 | 79,1 |
| Percentiles | 25 | 3,7 | 22,7 |
| | 50 | 8,9 | 35,4 |
| | 75 | 15,7 | 55,4 |

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

PostT= Post-test

The means indicate that the students increased their post-test performance as much as nearly four times compared to that of their pre-test performance.

Regarding, the standard deviation (SD), the value is smaller in the pre-test (9.4) than in the post-test (20.8). However, with reference to the means, the SD in the pre-test signifies a coefficient of variation of 88%, whereas in the post-test, it means a coefficient of variation of only 51%; i.e. dispersion of the scores was smaller in the post-test.

Percentile 25 shows that, in the pre-test, 25% of the students scored equal to or below 3.7; whereas in the post-test, 25% of the students scored equal to or below 22.7.

Bar graphs are used to represent the frequency distribution of the pre- and post-test score values (Figure 4.3). They provide numerical representations of how the subjects performed on the interval scale measures on both occasions.

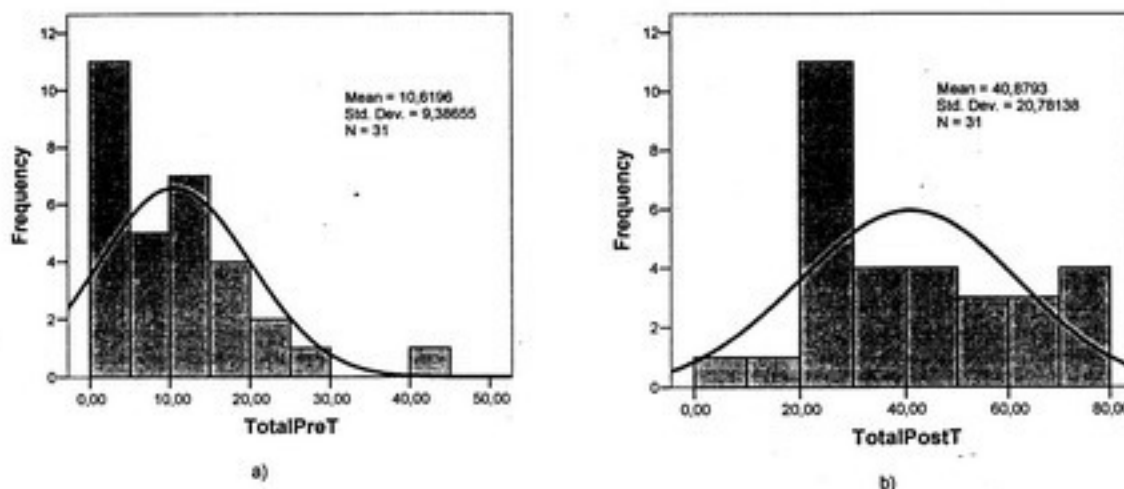


Figure 4.3 Pre- and post-test scores frequency. Source: Original.

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

PostT= Post-test

Skewedness is different in both graphs; graph *a* is notoriously positively skewed, with the longer tail at the upper end; whereas graph *b*, while it is still slightly positively skewed, shows a different distribution. In the pre-test, the scores clustered around small values, although there were some relatively high scores which increased the mean value. In contrast, in the post test, the scores were more evenly distributed around the mean.

Figure 4.4 shows scores behaviour in the pre-test and the direction they took in the post-test. Although both tests were marked utilising Flowerdew and Miller's Percentage Scale for measuring listening (2005) (p. 43), the scores were transformed into the Limited Description Scale (*ibid*) in order to report them.

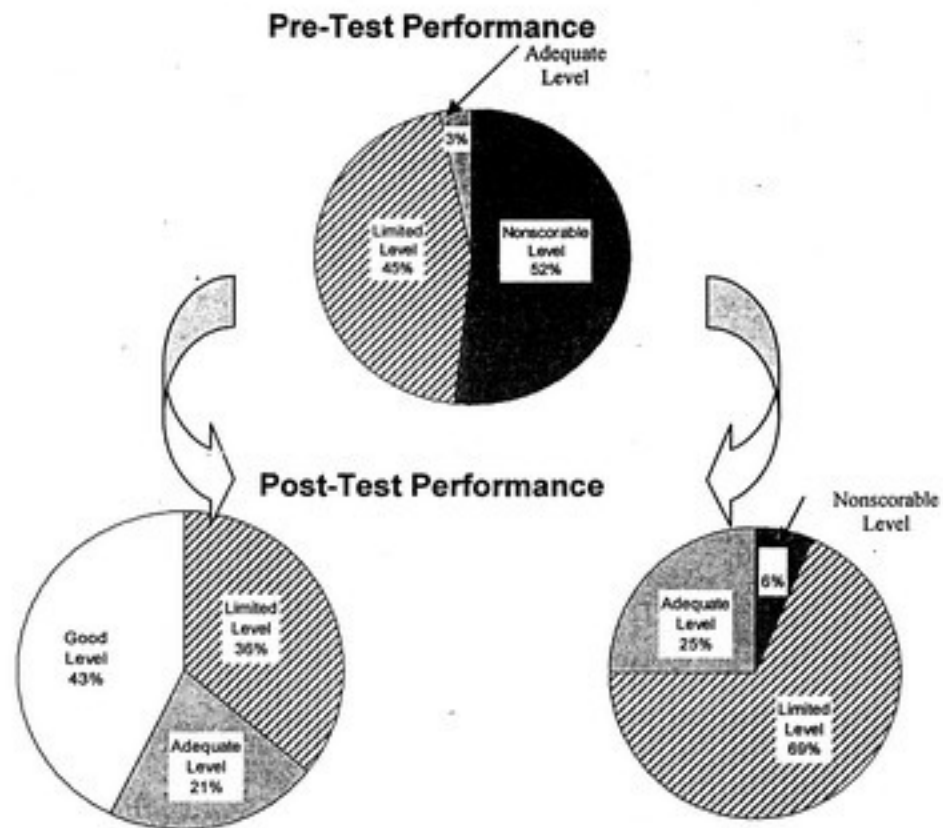


Figure 4.4 Pre- and post-test scores behaviour. Source: Original.

According to Flowerdew and Miller's Limited Description Scale (ibid), in the pre-test, 52% of the students fell into the Nonscorable level, 45% fell into the Limited level, and the remaining 3% fell into the Adequate level. In the post-test, the pre-test nonscorable group had the following behaviour: 6% stayed in the Nonscorable level, 69% moved to the Limited level, and 25% shifted to the Adequate level.

Those students who had reached the Limited level of performance in the pre-test showed the following behaviour: 36% remained in the Limited level, 21% moved to the Adequate level and 43% moved to the Good level. One student, the only one who had reached the Adequate level in the pre-test and represented 3% of the subjects, attained the Good level in the post-test (Figure 4.4). Nevertheless, all the students improved their performance with reference to Flowerdew and Miller's Percentage Scale (ibid).

NONPARAMETRIC TESTS

Next, a series of nonparametric tests were carried out in order to know if those differences were real and statistically significant. The following results were obtained:

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 4.2 Test Statistics (b). Source: Original.

| | TotalPostT - TotalPreT | MIPostTest - MIPreTest | SIPosTest - SIPreTest | DPostTest - DPreTest | NPosTest - NPreTest |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Z | -4,860(a) | -4,869(a) | -4,714(a) | -1,384(a) | -3,605(a) |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | ,000 | ,000 | ,000 | ,166 | ,000 |

a Based on negative ranks.

b Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Note:

PreT= Pre-test MI= Main Ideas

D= Details

PostT= Post-test SI= Supporting Ideas

N= Nuances

Ho= There are no significant differences between the medians of both sets of scores.

Not all the areas of the tests contributed in the same way to the final test results. As seen in Table 4.2, in the Details (D) column the p -value is larger than 0.05; but taken all the areas together, in the Totals column the p -value (Asymp. Sig) is smaller than 0.05; as a consequence, the Ho is rejected, i.e. the pre- and post-tests means did not have the same distribution. Therefore, with a significance level of 95% it could be ascertained that the two sets of scores, the pre- and post-tests were different, regarding the main ideas (MI), supporting ideas (SI) and nuances (N).

Sign Test

Table 4.3 Test Statistics (b). Source: Original.

| | TotalPostT - TotalPreT | MIPostTest - MIPreTest | SIPosTest - SIPreTest | DPostTest - DPreTest | NPosTest - NPreTest |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Z | -5,388 | -5,388 | -5,199 | | |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | ,000 | ,000 | ,000 | | |
| Exact Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | ,286(a) | ,007(a) |

a Binomial distribution used.

b Sign Test

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

MI= Main Ideas

D= Details

PostT= Post-test

SI= Supporting Ideas

N= Nuances

The result of the sign test also determined that the p -value is smaller than 0.05 (see Table 4.3). Therefore, it could be assumed that both sets of scores were different in values and symmetries (dispersion was different). When analysing each area individually, it can be observed that, comparing both tests the differences are statistically significant in the MI, SI and N.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION AND CORRELATIONAL ANALYSES

This section intends to explain the influence that the different parts of each test had on the total score achieved by the subjects on both opportunities. As explained before, the tests were scored regarding the different types of information the students were able to record, i.e., the number of main ideas (MI), supporting ideas (SI), details (D) and nuances (N) which they were able to identify and write down in their tests. Both tests were based on different recordings, consequently, they have different number of ideas, and that was the reason why a percentage scale was used to score the tests. In order to determine what types of information the students could process better, multiple regression and correlational analyses were conducted.

Pre-test

Table 4.4 Model Fit pre-test. *Source:* Original.

| Model Summary | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
| 1 | .998 ^a | .996 | .996 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), NPreTest, MIPreTest, DPreTest, SIPreTest

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

PostT= Post-test

MI= Main Ideas

SI= Supporting Ideas

D= Details

N= Nuances

The value of the adjusted R square (see Table 4.4) equals 0.996 in the pre-test. Therefore, it indicates that nearly 100% of the dependent variable (total scores) could be explained by the independent variables (MI, SI, D, N).

Table 4.5 Estimates Regression Coefficients Pre-test. Source: Original.

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Correlations | | |
| | | B | Beta | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1 | MIPreTest | ,980 | ,443 | ,687 | ,985 | ,347 |
| | SIPreTest | ,938 | ,265 | ,750 | ,954 | ,194 |
| | DPreTest | 1,024 | ,342 | ,698 | ,979 | ,297 |
| | NPreTest | ,986 | ,429 | ,593 | ,989 | ,401 |

a. Dependent Variable: TotalPreTest

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

MI= Main Ideas

D= Details

PostT= Post-test

SI= Supporting Ideas

N= Nuances

Table 4.5 shows that the order of importance, from higher to lower, of the independent variables in the pre-test was as follows: main ideas, nuances, details and supporting ideas, according to the standardised beta coefficient.

Correlations:

The zero order of correlation indicates the significance of each variable; but when eliminating the influence of the others in the part correlation, it can be observed that the independent variables which had greater influence on the dependent variable were nuances and main ideas (see Table 4.5).

Post-test

Table 4.6 Model Fit post-test. Source: Original.

| Model Summary | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
| 1 | 1,000 ^a | ,999 | ,999 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), NPostTest, DPostTest, MIPosTest, SIPosTest

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

MI= Main Ideas

D= Details

PostT= Post-test

SI= Supporting Ideas

N= Nuances

The value of the adjusted R square (see Table 4.6) equals 0.99 in the post-test; therefore, it indicates that nearly 100% of the dependent variable (total scores) could be explained by the independent variables (MI, SI, D, N).

Table 4.7 Estimates Regression Coefficients Post-test. *Source:* Original.

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Correlations | | |
| | | B | Beta | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1 | MIPosTest | ,986 | ,329 | ,918 | ,990 | ,181 |
| | SiPosTest | 1,001 | ,383 | ,931 | ,991 | ,190 |
| | DPostTest | 1,013 | ,146 | ,821 | ,960 | ,089 |
| | NPostTest | 1,012 | ,276 | ,802 | ,992 | ,206 |

a. Dependent Variable: TotalPostTest

Note:

PreT= Pre-test

PostT= Post-test

MI= Main Ideas

SI= Supporting Ideas

D= Details

N= Nuances

Table 4.7 shows that the order of importance, from higher to lower of the independent variables, in the post-test was as follows: supporting ideas, main ideas, nuances, and details, according to the standardised beta coefficient.

Correlations:

The zero order of correlation indicates the significance of each variable; but when eliminating the influence of the others in the part correlation, it can be observed that the independent variables which had greater influence on the dependent variable were nuances, supporting ideas and main ideas; the influence of details on the scores was much smaller (see Table 4.7).

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

To provide a concise and meaningful description of the subjective data collected in the survey, a graphic representation of the students' beliefs about the STP is shown in Figure 4.3. Every item showed a positive tendency, as all of them fell to the right of the mean value.

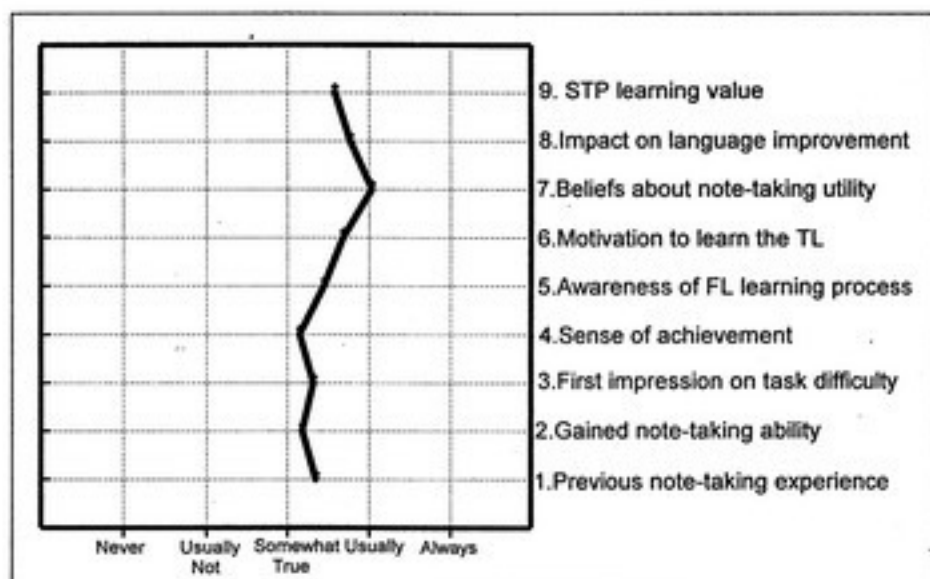


Figure 4.5 Students' affective reactions to the STP: Source: Original.

As can be observed in Figure 4.5, all the items were rated above the mean value of the five-point Likert-type scale which was used to collect the students' affective reactions to the STP. Note-taking utility was the highest regarded item. Next in ranking came the impact that the STP had on language improvement. Motivation generated by the STP to learn the TL was positioned in the third place. STP learning value was ranked fourth. The fifth place was held by awareness of the FL learning process gained with the STP. Previous note-taking experience came next. First impression of task difficulty was ranked seventh. Gained note-taking ability came eighth, and sense of achievement in the STP held the last position.

INTERVIEWING

Three interviews were conducted two weeks after the post-test. Data were encoded in the following questions which are presented below with excerpts from the participants' answers (the transcripts were translated by the researcher as the interviews were conducted in the L1).

In order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees they were given fictitious names: Jorge, Sebastián and Marcos, corresponding to Subject 1, Subject 2, and Subject 3 as presented in the Methodology Chapter.

Q 1: What English background knowledge do you have?

J: What I learnt at high school. Very little. A bit of grammar. Very little knowledge. No speaking, no listening. Then, the first level at university.

S: Little. I had English at high school, but I didn't study much, I didn't pay much attention. Most of what I know I learnt by listening to music, reading the lyrics, listening again and translating.

M: In addition to the basic English at high school, I had private lessons for four years.

Q2: How did you take notes in the past?

J: Linear notes, using a bit of abbreviations, creating a personal coding.

S: I write verbatim, one phrase after the other (he used the present tense).

M: I used the linear system. Sometimes I underlined the main ideas, used colour, arrows. Occasionally, I elaborated a diagram.

Q3: How much experience did you have in listening to English speech before the STP?

J: None at high school. Very little outside the academic setting because I don't watch much TV or listen to music much.

S: Occasionally, the teacher brought some listening material to work with, but generally we had to repeat; she said a phrase and we had to repeat after her. At home I listened to music. Sometimes, in MTV (a music TV channel) a video with the subtitle was shown, that helped me a lot.

M: We used to do listening, but not very often. It was the most difficult task to perform, maybe, because it was the least developed skill.

Q4: How did you like taking a strategy-training programme in listening and note-taking?

J: It was very interesting. It was useful for comprehension because it was an organised way to identify the most important ideas.

[Comparing to the traditional method] It was more useful, because, previously, I tried to translate the text literally, and I missed a lot of information. It gave me extra time to listen, as the intention was not to translate, but rather to understand ideas, to interpret the message.

S: I think it was too fast, too ambitious. You asked us to listen to a text and write down notes, but we needed to know what to write about, not how to write it. It was too ambitious. I have my own way of taking notes; I have my own way of dealing with listening. I didn't pay much attention to the note-taking strategies. I was more concerned about understanding the oral message. I knew that the post-test would require to listen to a text and to write down the most important ideas. So I said to myself 'what's the use of developing note-taking strategies if I don't know what to write about?' Therefore, I spent my time listening to the recorded material.

M: I quite liked it. Something new. It was helpful because listening was my weakest skill and we did a lot of practice. I think that note-taking can serve other subjects as well, and listening strategies helped to increase the vocabulary.

Q5: What did you do when you were asked to listen to and take notes on a lecture or an interview?

J: Well, in the first listening I tried to write down some ideas. Then, in the second listening..., you see..., what happens is that sometimes the speech is fast and we are slow, when we have more less managed to understand a word, we have already missed a lot of information. In the second listening I tried to analyse the text more deeply, taking into account the other words, the co-text.

S: At the beginning, I understood very little to take notes, I wrote down a few words. Sometimes, a student asked a question, so I had an idea of what I would listen again, what words would appear in the text. My notes were very poor in the first lessons. Then, you are surprised to see that you are able to write more and more, but this is because you are used to performing the task, you get used to it.

If I write down phrases in English it means that I haven't understood much of what was said. If I take notes in Spanish it means that I have understood the message. It is more difficult to take notes in English. You have to know more vocabulary. Usually if I write down phrases in English, they are isolated phrases; I don't actually understand the ideas. So, I took notes in Spanish in the post-test because I intended to write something more complex.

M: In the first listening, I tried to write down a few things, to understand as much as I could. In the second listening, I tried to round out the concepts, the most important ideas.

Q6: What does it mean for your college life to have learned strategies to take notes more effectively?

J: It is interesting, I mean, in addition that it is important for English, we have been trained in note-taking techniques which can be used in other subjects to organise and store information, as well.

S: I have my own method to take notes. I write verbatim. I write one phrase after the other. I was used to take notes in my own way. It would have been an enormous task to change it, because I would have had to practise, read the students' notes, etc. I devoted myself to trying to understand what was said.

M: It is important because, in the other subjects, with the subject teachers it is useful to have a practical way to record what they say.

Q7: How has your English knowledge improved by the use of listening and note-taking strategies?

J: I have benefited from it. If we speak of listening, I have benefited from it. And with respect to the other aspects, I believe that when we are dealing with English, there is always some

grammar we improve, even if it is not the teaching point; we improve our vocabulary and writing, because we try to summarise or record the message we are listening to, we make an effort to write it well, we do some research, and this is to internalise knowledge.

S: There has been an improvement, but I am not sure it was because of note-taking. It is more likely that the progress was due to the fact that I studied English very hard. I searched for lyrics to contribute to my own learning. What I did was to increase my vocabulary.

M: I think there has been an improvement. I think the final results were positive, the strategies helped. When we improve listening, we develop other skills as well. Listening was very difficult for me because you can't see the words; when you read you can see them, you understand the text more easily. The other skills were easier to learn. When you listen you have to understand the meaning of words by their sounds, the pronunciation.

These were extracts from the answers provided by the participants during the interviews, with reference to their past experience in learning the TL, in FL listening and in note-taking; their experience within the context of the STP; and the implications which the STP had had for them. Interpretation of their responses was provided in the Discussion Chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The aim of this study was to intend to improve the level of achievement of English for Academic Purposes for engineering students attending their second level of EFL at FI-UNaM. To carry out this endeavour a strategy-training programme in listening and note-taking was designed, implemented and evaluated during the first semester of 2007.

The investigation had identified the following objectives to be accomplished:

1. To teach listening strategies that might help students become better language learners
2. To identify the effects of language learning strategies instruction on the development of the interlanguage in the subjects under investigation.

To actively pursue the first objective, a decision was made in favour of direct, integrated strategy instruction. As a result, the instructional materials were carefully written, and lessons were delivered, in which selected LLS were learnt and practised in an orchestrated fashion, in order to enhance the subjects' listening and note-taking skills. Next, a learning styles questionnaire was administered to the subjects so that they could learn about and reflect on their preferred approach to language learning. Simultaneously, the data served to identify the students' learning style and make the necessary adjustments in class for individual differences.

To accomplish the second objective, first, a pre-post test design was deployed. Then, a survey on the subjects' affective reactions to the STP was conducted. Last, three interviews were held so that a deeper understanding of the learning process could be achieved. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse the data collected in the study.

INTERPRETING THE LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the factors which influence the choice of LLS is students' learning styles, favouring the use of some strategies and avoiding the use of others. Although the questionnaire used by the researcher to elicit the students learning styles was not comprehensive and lacked scientific

rigour, it, nevertheless, served the purpose of raising the students' interest in the language learning process, and at the same time provided the researcher with a broad picture of the subjects' preferred approach to language learning. This knowledge allowed for adjustments of the materials and instructional techniques during the course of the STP in order to meet individual needs.

There is certainly no point in having students complete a questionnaire or describe the ways they learn best in class unless the teacher intends to actually utilise the student input to help them gain more control over their lives and educational futures.

(Kinsella, in Reid 1995:188)

The results of the learning styles questionnaire administered to the subjects of this study evidenced a relatively even distribution of the different learning styles identified in the classroom. The subjects showed a greater preference for the interactive approach to learning, followed by the bottom-up approach, and finally by the top-down approach, though there were no significant differences. So, the scenario in the classroom was as follows: there were a greater number of learners who were inclined to adapt their learning style to the nature of the task; a considerable number of analytic learners (field-independent learners); and a smaller number of global learners (field-sensitive learners).

Analytic learners were taught to use global strategies such as predicting, inferencing and summarising. Global learners became skilled at applying analytic strategies such as reasoning, analysing expressions, and distinguishing relevant ideas from minor details. The STP provided procedures to use strategies that were beyond the normal style boundaries of each student (Oxford, in Reid 1995:44).

INTERPRETING THE PRE- AND POST-TEST RESULTS

The pre- and post tests were the two most important measuring instruments in this study, since they were meant to measure the students' level of achievement in listening comprehension by means of note-taking abilities before and after strategy training. In addition, they were expected to provide reliable data so that steadfast conclusions could be drawn of the effects which the STP had on language development.

The pre-test was a diagnostic test to probe the students' language knowledge and skills in listening and note-taking and to use the knowledge gained as the basis for the development of the STP. The pre-test was supposed to be easier than the post-test. The spoken text was chosen on the assumption that the students were more familiar with the interview genre than with the lecture genre. The discourse was simple and the vocabulary familiar. There were two speakers, male and female, the female asked the questions, and the male answered them. A note-taking format was provided for the students to complete with the information they heard on the recording (see Appendix 3). The oral text was chunked into meaningful segments and played twice.

In order to score the students' performance on the pre- and post-tests, the different ideas of the texts were given weighted scores²³. Thus, four points were assigned to main ideas (MI), three points to supporting ideas (SI), two points to details (D) and one point to nuances (N). The decision was made on the assumption that not all information is equally relevant in a text, and consequently, it is not so important to identify details or nuances, as it is to recognise main or supporting ideas.

According to the multiple regression and correlational analyses, the students could record, in their pre-test notes, a greater number of nuances and main ideas, followed by details and supporting ideas from the text. What does that mean? The conjecture was made that the students were able to identify these ideas because they could understand some familiar discourse markers which allowed them to focus on the information which followed. The students' level of achievement in the pre-test was very low. There were even two students who could not write anything in their tests. Furthermore, three students wrote their notes in their L1.

The post-test was an achievement test. It was meant to measure the language knowledge and skills which the subjects gained in listening comprehension and note-taking by means of the STP. They had been trained in listening to interviews and lectures, and taking notes for 39 hours during eleven weeks. The chosen genre was then that of the lecture. Discourse was intricate (see Appendix 4). There was only one speaker, a female. On this occasion, the lecture internal structure was provided to serve as a guide to follow the lecture topic development. The recording was chunked into meaningful segments, and played twice.

²³ Weighted scores are scores which are based on different weightings being given to the questions in a test (Brown, 1988:85).

This time, the students could record, in their notes, a greater number of nuances and supporting ideas, followed by main ideas. With respect to details, they could record only a few of them. This may be due to the fact that details were not signalled with discourse markers and were minor ideas in the text. On the other hand, nuances, although the least important, were always marked by micro-markers, such as, 'for example, now, etc'. As obvious, there were more supporting ideas than main ideas in the text. This may be one of the reasons why they managed to identify more of them. Another reason for the identification of more supporting ideas could be discourse structure. In the text, main ideas came first in the paragraph (see Appendix 4) so when the students managed to understand what the paragraph was about, they could just record the ideas which supported the controlling ideas. So it could be assumed that the problem was not with understanding, but with real-time input processing. The post-test performance proved a vast improvement over the pre-test one. Only one student remained in the Nonscorable level. The median fell at the end of the Limited level, and 45% of the students reached either the Adequate or Good level. Results indicated an overall improvement in the subjects' level of achievement in listening comprehension after the STP, as perceived by the amount of information provided in their lecture notes in their post-test (see Chapter 4).

The STP favoured the processing-based approach to input; that is, the learners were able to direct their attention and focus on relevant language cues in the input while listening to the spoken texts (Skehan, 1998:47). In addition, output was pushed by means of note-taking tasks. Production encouraged learners to move from semantic (top-down) to syntactic (bottom-up) processing (Swain, 1985 cited in Ellis 1994:282). As a result, development in the interlanguage occurred. This was evidenced in the post-test notes which demonstrated an improvement in the quantity and quality of information provided. The majority of the students were able to write complete ideas, and present them in a hierarchical format, utilising symbols and abbreviations learnt in the course of the STP.

In short, the STP allowed input to become intake for the students. They could make sense of long stretches of spoken text, and record relevant information in written form. This means that they were able to progress along the interlanguage continuum, which was the ultimate aim of the study.

INTERPRETING THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The students rated the different survey descriptors in the order presented below and inferences have been drawn from them.

1. Beliefs about note-taking utility: This first position must be due to the fact that the subjects were university students and had already experienced the benefits of note-taking in other content subjects. In addition, note-taking techniques in the language classroom helped them regulate and control the incoming messages in the FL allowing for better comprehension and organisation of the information.
2. Impact of the STP on language improvement: The strategy training empowered the students to direct their own learning process. They became aware of the effects which the STP had in advancing their language knowledge and skills.
3. Motivation generated by the STP to learn the TL: The strategy training boosted the students' self-esteem. They realised that they were able to comprehend the TL better and to give appropriate response. Success led to motivation which in turn led to success. In this way a virtuous circle was created.
4. STP learning value: The students considered strategy training to be useful for advancing their knowledge and ability in other FL skills. This outcome has very important pedagogic implications. The STP had a positive response on the part of the students; consequently, strategy training could be implemented to improve the level of achievement in other language skills in academic settings.
5. Awareness of FL learning process: Much discussion went on in the classroom about the way language was learnt, and how LLS could aid the process. Metacognition is rare in university engineering programmes, and as a consequence, it was difficult at the beginning of the STP for the students to think and speak of the learning process. A change in attitude was needed and achieved.
6. Previous note-taking experience: The students had already been taking notes in other content subjects at university. However, most of them managed to improve their note quality during the STP, comparing their pre- and post tests. Features found in their post-tests were: appropriate layout, information presented in a neat format, development of ideas instead of disconnected words, etc. Nevertheless, improvement in note-taking

ability evidenced in the post-test might be the consequence of language improvement as mentioned above.

7. First impression on task difficulty: Although listening and note-taking in an FL are very demanding tasks, this item was ranked seventh. This might be due to the fact that task difficulty was graded according to the students' current level of proficiency. On the other hand, the survey was conducted on the last day of the STP, and the students could have forgotten the initial difficulties experienced if we take into account the pre-test results.
8. Gained note-taking ability in the STP was ranked eighth. However, as said before, most students showed a significant improvement in their note quality in comparison with their pre-test notes. Gained note-taking ability might correlate with the impact of the STP on language improvement, i.e. improvement gained in their post-test note quality could be attributed to the fact they managed to understand more information in the TL, i.e. input became comprehensible. As a consequence, they could write down notes in English more effectively.
9. Sense of achievement in the STP: Although the average score for this item showed a positive tendency, it was the last in the list. The survey was conducted on the same day of the post-test; therefore, the students answered the questionnaire before they were given any feedback on their performance. This answer might be interpreted as culturally biased in the sense that, in our society, to speak highly of oneself is neither encouraged nor well regarded. It seems that one's image is built on the impression which other people hold of one's own worth. When the post-test results were made public, the students revelled in their success.

To sum up, the students rated the STP positively. The survey proved very useful to see the STP from the students' point of view; and in this way, to have a more comprehensive and real picture of the situation under observation. One last remark, the survey (or rather the researcher) failed to find out about the learners' previous listening ability, which would have provided more information about the improvement gained in this area with the STP.

INTERPRETING THE INTERVIEWS

It was assumed that the information gained from the interviews seemed to illustrate the main features shared by the subjects under study. The interview questions are presented below, and the researcher's interpretation is given.

What English background knowledge do you have?

Jorge and Sebastián were low proficient in the TL. Marcos attended four-year private language lessons, though he said that listening was his weakest skill. The three of them claimed that they did not learn much at high school. The first level of English at university attempts to develop students' skills in reading comprehension so that they are able to understand technical texts in their university study. Usually, they manage to reach high level of proficiency in reading materials related to their field of knowledge.

How did you take notes in the past?

Jorge and Marcos used the linear system. Jorge used some abbreviations of his own, and Marcos made use of some extra focusing and schematising techniques. Sebastián wrote verbatim, transcribing what he heard.

How much experience did you have in listening to English speech?

Jorge had very little exposure to listening outside of the classroom and he had not done any listening at high school. However, he had already been exposed to listening at university, as he was re-attending the subject. Sebastián had done some listening at high school, but he claimed that he had learnt English by listening to music and reading the lyrics at home. Marcos acknowledged that though he had attended private lessons for four years, listening was an underdeveloped skill. In fact through the interview, he kept repeating that listening was the most difficult skill for him to achieve.

How did you like taking a strategy-training programme in listening and note-taking?

Jorge and Marcos found the experience useful and interesting. Jorge claimed that this new approach was superior to the former method employed at developing listening skills. Conversely, Sebastián believed that it was a too ambitious goal. He shut himself out from the STP. Rather he focused on learning vocabulary through his old learning method, by listening to music and reading the lyrics. Despite his overt rejection to the STP, he made use of several LLS in a consistent way: organising, identifying the purpose of the language task, planning for the language task, paying attention, self-monitoring, self evaluating, using resources, practising

naturalistically, repeating, and translating. Nevertheless, Sebastian's approach proved inefficient because he was unable to use the TL to write his notes.

Students can be familiarised with some of the useful characteristics of styles other than their own, thus enhancing their natural style. However, at times individuals fixate upon a particular learning approach simply because it is more familiar. Even after being introduced to a particularly effective method, they may resort to comfortable though proven inefficient methods.

(Kinsella, in Reid 1995:190)

What did you do when you were asked to listen to and take notes on a lecture or an interview?

Jorge and Marcos paid attention to the incoming message, and inferred the meaning of the message. Marcos also found predicting as a very useful strategy. In addition, both used analysing expressions and reasoning deductively. In the first listening they wrote down main ideas, and in the second listening they monitored comprehension and wrote down details and evaluated their performance.

Sebastián paid attention and wrote the main ideas. If he understood the meaning he translated them into Spanish, if he did not, he wrote down the ideas in English. He monitored his comprehension in the second listening and repeated the procedure. Sometimes he checked his comprehension with a more proficient user of the language (another classmate). It is the researcher's belief that Sebastián used translating as a compensation strategy because he felt unsure about his L2 knowledge and he was unable to develop affective strategies, such as taking risk wisely.

What does it mean for your college life to have learned strategies to take notes more effectively?

Jorge and Marcos found that the STP had contributed to their university development. Especially, they found note-taking techniques very useful to be implemented in other subjects. Sebastián, on the other hand, argued against the usefulness of LLS. He claimed that he already knew how to take notes, and that to learn new strategies was not worth doing. He did not improve his techniques (he, even, continued writing in L1 when he was asked to perform in the L2), he did not use any new note-taking formats, or symbols or abbreviations taught.

How has your English knowledge improved by the use of listening and note-taking strategies?

Both, Jorge and Marcos believed that the STP had contributed to advance their performance in English. They claimed that they were able to progress in other language skills through the development of listening skills, Marcos even said *"The strategies helped"*.

Sebastián admitted that there had been a great improvement in his language proficiency, although he claimed that it was due to his dedication to listening in the TL, that the key to his success was learning the vocabulary that he would need to solve the post-test task. Strangely, he asserted that he learnt the required vocabulary through listening to music and reading the lyrics outside the classroom, although he said that he also listened to the recorded material provided with the students' notes. Unfortunately, the post-test had a negative washback²⁴ effect in Sebastián. It prevented him from taking advantages of learning new strategies which might have helped him become a better learner, not only of English, but also a better learner in general. He was so preoccupied with the post-test event, that he studied to pass the test and could not see the relevance and usefulness of the STP.

CONCLUSION

The general impression was that the three interviewees stood for the entire population under study. Jorge and Marcos found the STP useful for advancing their knowledge and skills in the TL, as well as for improving their note-taking quality in other subjects at university. Sebastián resisted the new approach and stuck to his old methods of learning English and taking notes. Although Sebastián was the only subject who wrote his post-test in Spanish (in fact, he used code-mixing), it was the researcher's assumption that there might be some other subjects who did not find the STP useful, and consequently did not pay attention to instruction, but rather learnt the mechanisms to pass the achievement test. Coincidentally, Jorge and Sebastián were the only subjects out of 31 who used the linear system to store information, and did not include any symbols and abbreviations in their post-test notes.

²⁴ The effects of tests on classroom teaching are referred to as washback. Learners may study for the test, teachers may teach to the test. If this leads to beneficial language activities, the test is said to have positive washback, and if the effect is not beneficial, the test is said to have a negative washback (Buck, 2001:196).

TRIANGULATION

Subject: *Jorge*

Learning Style:

Type 4, accordingly, Jorge had a bottom-up approach to learning.

Some interesting data: He liked to learn by reading, looking at pictures, movies and videotapes, as well as by listening to CD in class. He enjoyed studying by himself, and working out problems.

Pre-test:

Score: 10.11%

In the pre-test, there were 9 Main Ideas, 10 Supporting Ideas, 7 Details, and 9 Nuances. Jorge found: 0 Main Ideas, 1 Supporting Idea, 2 Details, and 2 Nuances.

Important detail: He wrote his pre-test notes in Spanish.

Post-test:

Score: 21.81%

In the post-test, there were 11 Main Ideas, 13 Supporting Ideas, 9 Details, and 9 Nuances.

Jorge wrote: 3 Main Ideas, 3 Supporting Ideas, 1 Detail, and 1 Nuance.

Important detail: He wrote his post-test notes in English. The ideas were more fully developed than in the pre-test.

Survey:

How true of you the statement is?

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Results

Table 5.1 Jorge's affective reaction to the STP. *Source: Original.*

| Order | Item | Score |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| 1 st | Item 7 - Beliefs about note-taking utility Item 8 - Impact of the STP on language improvement Item 9 - STP learning value | 5 |
| 2 nd | Item 2 - Gained note-taking ability in the STP Item 5 - Awareness of FL learning process Item 6 - Motivation generated by the STP to learn the TL | 4 |
| 3 rd | Item 1 - Previous note-taking experience Item 3 - First impression on task difficulty Item 4 - Sense of achievement in the STP | 3 |

Interview:

Special Trait: he was re-attending the subject.

Outcome: He showed a positive attitude towards the STP.

Subject: Sebastián

Learning Style:

Type 3, consequently, he was inclined to use a top-down approach to learning. In fact, he did so when he used learning resources such as music, lyrics, recorded class material. He had a global approach to learning, he did not analyse the language he listened to, nor did he wish to read the students' notes or explore new strategies.

Pre-test:

Score: 4.49%

In the pre-test, there were 9 Main Ideas, 10 Supporting Ideas, 7 Details, and 9 Nuances.

Sebastián wrote: 0 Main Ideas, 1 Supporting Idea, 0 Details, and 1 Nuance.

Important detail: He wrote his pre-test notes in Spanish. He included just a few phrases, he did not develop ideas.

Post-test:

Score: 52.72%

In the post-test, there were 11 Main Ideas, 13 Supporting Ideas, 9 Details, and 9 Nuances.

Sebastián wrote: 7 Main Ideas, 7 Supporting Ideas, 2 Details, and 5 Nuances.

Important detail: He wrote his post-test notes in Spanish, though he included some phrases in English. In addition, he added some comments on the difficulty encountered in comprehension in certain parts of the text. He developed better quality notes.

Survey:

How true of you the statement is?

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Results

Table 5.2 Sebastián's affective reaction to the STP. *Source:* Original.

| Order | Item | Score |
|-----------------|--|-------|
| 1 st | Item 1 - Previous note-taking experience Item 3 - First impression on task difficulty Item 7 - Beliefs about note-taking utility Item 8 - Impact of the STP on language improvement | 5 |
| 2 nd | Item 6 - Motivation generated by the STP to learn the TL | 4 |
| 3 rd | Item 4 - Sense of achievement in the STP Item 5 - Awareness of FL learning process Item 9 - STP learning value | 3 |
| 4 th | Item 2 - Gained note-taking ability | 1 |

Interview:

Special Trait: He wrote his pre- and post-test notes in Spanish.

Outcome: He dismissed the STP as way to improve his performance in the TL or in other subjects.

Subject: Marcos

Learning Style:

Type 2, as a result, he used a bottom-up approach to learning.

Some interesting data: He liked learning with others; he liked the teacher's explanations and interacting with peers.

Pre-test:

Score: 15.73%

In the pre-test, there were 9 Main Ideas, 10 Supporting Ideas, 7 Details, and 9 Nuances.

Marcos wrote: 1 Main Idea, 1 Supporting Idea, 2 Details, and 3 Nuances.

Important Detail: He managed to write complete ideas.

Post-test:

Score: 35.45%

In the post-test, there were 11 Main Ideas, 13 Supporting Ideas, 9 Details, and 9 Nuances.

Marcos wrote: 5 Main Ideas, 4 supporting Ideas, 1 Detail, and 5 Nuances.

Important details: He arranged his notes in a neat outline format, he used some abbreviations.

NB: Comparing the three subjects, he was the one who improved the least. Nevertheless, his post-test notes were the best of the three, because, he wrote his notes in English and the format was very well organised and displayed. However, scores were given by the amount of information provided. Note quality and layout were not considered in the scoring, the test was meant to measure comprehension.

Survey:

How true of you the statement is?

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Results

Table 5.3 Marcos' s affective reaction to the STP. *Source:* Original.

| Order | Item | Score |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| 1 st | Item 3 - First impression on task difficulty Item 7 - Beliefs about note-taking utility Item 8 - Impact of the STP on language improvement | 4 |
| 2 nd | Item 1 - Previous note-taking experience Item 2 - Gained note-taking ability Item 5 - Awareness of FL learning process Item 6 - Motivation generated by the STP to learn the TL Item 9 - STP learning value | 3 |
| 3 rd | Item 4 - Sense of achievement in the STP | 2 |

Interview:

Special Trait: He was chosen at random to stand for the average student in the STP.

Outcome: He found the STP useful for advancing his knowledge of the TL, and for improving his note-taking skills in other subjects, as well.

CONCLUSION

The interviews cast a new light on the study. Although Jorge claimed that the STP helped him improve his note-taking abilities, his post-test notes did not show any special features practised in the strategy training. He used the linear system, and made no use of symbols or abbreviations. His approach was topic-related. However, his listening performance in the post-test more than doubled his pre-test performance (it increased 116.07%). He moved from the Nonscorable level to the Limited level in Flowerdew & Miller's Assessing Listening Description Scale (2005). It is worth noticing that he managed to switch his linguistic code in the post-test.

On the other hand, Sebastián, who in the interview dismissed the STP, reached high levels of understanding in his post-test. According to Flowerdew & Miller's Assessing Listening Description Scale (*ibid*), he shifted from the Nonscorable level to the Adequate level in his post-test. His performance grew eleven times compared to that of his pre-test (1074.16%). Nevertheless, he did not improve his note-taking style; he used the linear system, wrote

verbatim and did not use any symbols or abbreviations. In addition, he wrote down L1 equivalents of the topics. If we have a look at his pre- and post-test results and his survey scoring, it seemed that Sebastián just resisted to change his approach to note-taking, but he benefited from the STP in the sense that he was motivated to learn the TL, and attained high level of achievement in listening comprehension.

Marcos started with a higher level of performance in his pre-test compared to his classmates', reaching in his pre-test the Limited level in Flowerdew & Miller's Assessing Listening Description Scale (*ibid*). Even when he more than doubled his post-test performance (125.36%), he was unable to progress beyond the Limited level in his post-test. His insufficient progress might be due to the fact that his expectancy of success was low. He scored item 4 – sense of achievement with 2 points. Nonetheless, he showed good note quality; unfortunately, note quality was not a parameter considered in scoring.

In short, convergent validity²⁵ proved enriching as it evidenced the complexity of human behaviour. Data collected from Jorge and Sebastián showed some inconsistency. Jorge claimed that the STP allowed him to improve his note-taking skills, but performance demonstrated that his improvement was only in listening abilities. Sebastián disregarded the STP as a way of learning effective listening strategies, but his performance in listening comprehension was outstanding. Marcos was a promising student who fell short of the adequate level in his listening abilities. However, he made a significant progress in note-taking quality.

EVALUATING THE STRATEGY-TRAINING PROGRAMME

"In evaluating the success of any strategy instruction, teachers should look for individuals' progress toward L2 proficiency and for signs of increased self-efficacy or motivation" (Oxford, 2003:8-9). Oxford's eight-step model for strategy training (1990:204) was used as a checklist to evaluate how the STP was carried out. The steps have been rephrased as questions.

1. Were the learners' needs met?

Yes. The students' need was to improve their level of achievement in academic listening, inferred from results obtained in previous English courses at the university level. The different

²⁵ Comparison of subjective measures with other measures which have already been shown to be valid (Cohen & Manion, 1994:281).

statistical studies showed they managed to do so. However, not everyone reached an adequate level of proficiency according to Flowerdew and Miller's Limited Description Scale for measuring listening (2005). Adequate and good levels were attained only by 45% of the subjects.

Note quality was not considered in scoring, though most students improved their note-taking quality. They switched from linear notes, verbatim to concept-ordering notes. In their post-test they also used symbols and abbreviations learnt during the STP, which allowed them to write faster and consequently to include more information in their notes. However, the learning of note-taking techniques was not the only reason why the learners managed to improve their notes in their post-test. Language improvement might be the key reason for this progress, an issue which has already been discussed in detail when interpreting the test results and the survey results. In addition, in the pre-test, three students wrote down their notes in the L1; only one persisted in this practice in the post-test, although he moved from the Nonscorable level to the Adequate level.

2. Were the LLS well selected?

The STP was based on theoretical knowledge and research findings in lecture comprehension (Flowerdew, in Flowerdew 1994); L2 listening comprehension and lecture note-taking (Chaudron et al., in *ibid*); and listening strategies of successful L2 listeners (Lynch 2004; Rost 2002). Important knowledge on lecture and note-taking was also gained from Jordan (1997) and applied to the STP. The LLS were chosen from Oxford's taxonomy (1990) and combined carefully to achieve the proposed objectives for each lesson. Adjustments were made as the STP developed. Note-taking was the macro-strategy which called for the use of other strategies which acted as support.

In the eleven lessons which made up the STP there was a combination of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. Twenty-eight strategies were taught and practised during the STP. The LLS most practised during the STP were:

- Organising
- Planning for language task
- Paying attention
- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Self-monitoring
- Self-evaluating
- Grouping

- Note-taking
- Highlighting
- Summarising
- Analysing expression
- Reasoning deductively
- Using linguistic and non-linguistic clues
- Cooperating with peers
- Discussing your feelings with someone else
- Making positive statements
- Taking risks wisely.

Recursiveness was the special characteristic in the use of LLS. If the selection of LLS is examined in the light of the students' gained knowledge, it can be said that they had been well chosen.

3. Was the STP integrated with the regular language lessons?

Yes. Previous research advocated for the integration of strategy training with regular language courses. The advice was followed and the STP was designed with the regular instructional materials which were currently used in the language classes. *Academic Listening Encounters: life in society - Listening, Note-taking, Discussion* (2004) was the textbook which had been in use since the previous year. The activities were reformulated in the light of the new approach. Additional material was incorporated from *Study Listening: a course in listening to lectures and note-taking* (2004), and *Study Skills in English* (2004). The compilation resulted in the Students' Notes which were the backbone of the STP, since they contained the theory and practice necessary to carry it out (see Appendix 1). Furthermore, the STP was conducted for the period of time assigned to the regular study of EAP in the curriculum during the first semester of 2007 at university.

4. Were motivational issues considered?

Yes. Dörnyei's process-oriented model of learning motivation in the L2 classroom (2001a) was adopted for generating and maintaining motivation in the students. Learners' intrinsic interest in the L2 learning process was raised by administering the learning styles questionnaire at the beginning of the STP and by discussing their achievements and difficulties in class. Students' expectancy of academic success was increased by providing tasks according to their present level of proficiency, and appropriate LLS to solve tasks which were beyond their current ability. Efforts were made to remove anxiety-provoking elements which might have hindered language

learning, and to create a friendly learning environment by promoting cooperation among peers. Positive statements were constantly made, and success was attributed to effort and appropriate use of LLS. Learner autonomy was fostered by the students gradually taking control of their own learning process, and thus developing self-efficacy. However, these motivational strategies did not work effectively for everyone (see Question 8).

5. Were materials and activities prepared for the purpose?

Yes. The Students' Notes were specially prepared to carry out the STP. Although they resulted from the compilation of three textbooks, the students' notes were original in the sense that they were tailored to gradually build the necessary skills to attain the pursued goal: to be able to understand spoken academic texts in the TL and take notes of the most relevant information in an appropriate format, so that the original message could be retrieved for further use. The lessons design followed the sequence in which the LLS and tasks were presented in Lynch (2004). Each lesson consisted in pre- while- and after listening activities. First the teacher presented, explained and modelled the strategies selected. Second, there were pre-listening activities to build background knowledge on the topic where pair work and whole-class discussion were encouraged. Third, the students did the first listening of the selected text and guided note-taking was practised. Fourth, the students listened to the recorded material a second time and detailed note-taking was attempted. Fifth, the students worked in pairs again and the resulting notes were compared. Sixth, listening strategy use was discussed as a whole-class activity. Finally, different types of follow-up activities, such as retrieval of the message from notes, personalising the topic, etc. were performed in class. Or if the students had to browse the Web for information to carry out the tasks, the activities were checked in the next lesson.

6. Was the STP a completely informed training?

Completely informed strategy training was the intent of this work. Although the researcher had never had any formal instruction in teaching LLS, she surveyed the literature, studied the theory, examined previous research work on the subject, and trusted her experience as a teacher to develop the STP. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, cited in Mayol 2000:46) claimed "Not all experienced teachers are expert". Apparently the difference between non-experts and experts lies in "a more efficient use of time by the latter, with better results and constant personal progress" (ibid). So, if those words were taken as reference, it could be said that the researcher became a self-made strategy teacher.

To carry out a completely informed training, O'Malley and Chamot's sequence for learning strategy instruction was followed (1988, cited in O'Malley & Chamot 1990). The teacher first got informed about the benefits of a particular set of strategies. Then, she presented it to the students. Next, she explained the pedagogic value of the strategies. Then, she modelled them by thinking aloud about the goals and mental process involved in the strategies. After that, she prompted the students to use them in cooperating learning tasks and peer tutoring; finally, the students and the teacher discussed the strategies used in class. Strategy transfer was achieved in the following lessons, as the students used the learnt strategies in subsequent tasks.

7. How well did the STP attain the set goal?

Data gathered from the pre- and post tests, the survey questionnaire and the interviews can be used to assess the strategy training. Every student managed to improve their level of achievement in academic listening, though as said before, only 45% of the learners reached an adequate or good level of proficiency in their post-test, with reference to Flowerdew and Miller's Limited Description Scale (2005). Causes for the students' unsatisfactory level of achievement might be insufficient knowledge and skills which they had brought to the classroom, together with little motivation to learn the TL.

The survey carried out at the end of the STP evidenced a positive response to the strategy instruction on the part of the students. The survey used a five-point Likert-type scale and the average score for each item in the survey was rated higher than the mean value.

Data gathered from the interviews also suggested a positive response to the STP. Two out of three students claimed that strategy instruction helped them become better language learners. With respect to the third student, his feedback should be taken with caution. Even when he said that he had learnt to perform the tasks his own way, reliable data, such as those obtained in the pre- and post-tests, evidenced a significant improvement in listening comprehension which would not have been possible without the aid of effective LLS.

8. Does the STP need revising?

Yes. First, self-monitoring and self-evaluating should be taught and practised earlier in the STP as they raise students' awareness of their own academic worth. In addition, evaluating peer work allows students to put actions into words while they suggest improvements in their classmates' notes. This mental process is very valuable since it makes students reflect on the way learning is achieved. Second, follow-up activities need enhancement since retrieval of the text from the notes was accomplished rather late in the STP, and not everyone could do it. This

leads to an adjustment in the role of the teacher. Less successful learners were in need of more teacher guidance in their learning process. The teacher should have been more alert to detecting students in need of extra support. Once less confident students are detected, a challenge for teachers is to find the means to help them become autonomous learners.

A fourth issue which needs consideration is how to avoid negative washback effect (the effect tests have on classroom teaching). Let us remember that one of the interviewee, Sebastián, admitted he had studied in order to pass the test. He was disconnected from the class, refused to learn any new strategies, and concentrated on practising listening his own way. Interpretation of the data had led the researcher to wonder whether there were other students who had not been able to profit from the STP, and just focused on learning the mechanisms to solve the test.

This leads to another issue. Even though motivation was thoroughly dealt with, and it was one of the reasons why the STP had positive outcomes, not everyone was motivated enough to learn the TL. It is necessary to inquire more into the effects that affect has on language learning and then to do the necessary adjustments in the STP approach.

To conclude, some adjustments are necessary. The Students' Notes need revising to do the necessary fine-tuning. Less successful learners should be detected by means of continuous assessment and provided with the appropriate scaffolding. It is necessary to devote more time and effort to developing specific strategies which foster autonomy in language learning. In addition, the STP should be aimed at encouraging those less motivated students; thus, negative washback effect might be avoided.

Nevertheless, the STP resulted in a positive classroom experience. A great deal of effort and time were expended preparing the material and tasks for the strategy instruction which resulted in improved teaching practices. The selected LLS met the students' needs as they evidenced a significant improvement in language proficiency. Strategy training was completely informed and integrated in the regular language lessons at the university. Motivational issues were given a lot of consideration; and finally, the STP was rated fairly high by its users.

EVALUATING VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

Validity and reliability are conditions which should be met by any piece of research. As previously stated, validity has to do with the extent to which a piece of research actually

investigates what the researcher claims to investigate; whereas, reliability refers to the consistency and replicability of research.

There are two types of validity: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the interpretability of research. It has to do with factors which may directly affect outcomes. It is concerned with the question: Do the experimental treatments, in fact, make a difference in the specific experiment under scrutiny? External validity refers to the extent to which the results can be generalised from sample to populations (Nunan, 1992:14-5).

There are also two types of reliability: internal reliability and external reliability. Internal reliability refers to the consistency of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. External reliability refers to the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study (*ibid*).

Because experimental or quasi-experimental research proved impossible in this situation due to the type of research attempted—remember that direct and integrated strategy training in regular language lesson was the intent of this study—, informed decision was made in favour of a non-experimental design. One-group pre-test post-test designs usually have weak internal validity. It is almost impossible to state with any confidence that the dependent variable, that is, the post-intervention improvement in academic listening, was exclusively due to the independent variable, namely, strategy training. Other reasons for improvements in the post-test performance could have been group history and maturation, negative washback effect, among others.

Nevertheless, the construct for measuring the current level of proficiency in the pre- and post-tests was well defined and operationalised. It was important to get the construct right; both theoretically and operationally, because the construct was what the tests were measuring, and this determined what the scores meant (Buck, 2001:94-5). Both tests measured the current level of proficiency in academic listening by means of the notes the students were able to take before and after the experimental treatment. The procedure for assessing both tests was also reliable. In both opportunities, a template was generated with the spoken text and the students' tests were benchmarked against it. To score the tests a percentage scale was used because it was thought to be more precise. However, for reporting the results a limited description scale was preferred for the tests to have empirical validity.

Regarding the other instruments for collecting data, namely, the learning styles questionnaire, the survey questionnaire, and the interview questions, they served their purposes. The learning styles quiz was meant to raise the students' interest in the TL learning process. In addition, the answers provided resulted in useful information for the researcher to understand the students' preferences for the use of some strategies and the avoidance of others, as well as to make the necessary adjustment during the course of the STP. The survey questionnaire cast light on the students' affective reactions to the STP; and the interviews contributed to enhance this vision.

The STP was an intervention study carried out in the classroom, not in a laboratory. Although the study might have had weak internal validity since there were variables which could not be controlled due to the nature of the study, it had strong external validity. It could be generalised from sample to population, i.e. it could be applied to university students of English at FI-UNAM in years to come, since the strategy training in listening and note-taking allowed the subjects to notoriously improve their level of proficiency in the TL. Besides, as stated in the Overview Chapter, the STP was also expected to serve as a model for other ESP²⁶ practitioners to enhance their students' language knowledge and skills in whatever areas were necessary.

A great deal of effort was made for the study to have internal reliability. The instruments for the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data were varied and were carefully selected and designed. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the treatment of the data. In addition, expert help was asked to carry out statistical analyses. A lot of thinking was devoted to interpreting the resultant data. Finally, triangular techniques were utilised to confront the data which the different measuring instruments yielded. It is the researcher's expectation that the results obtained from the study have represented the actual state of affair.

It is not the researcher's present responsibility to probe the STP external reliability. She hopes to have been clear enough on describing the different steps in the study so that it can be replicated by further researchers. Moreover, to report the students' level of achievement in both tests, she used Flowerdew & Miller's Limited Description Scale (2005) so that data from future studies could be compared against these ones. We just have to wait to find out whether or not the STP has had external reliability.

²⁶ English for Specific Purposes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Throughout this Chapter, concern was expressed regarding two related issues, affect and self-efficacy in language learning. The researcher wondered whether a larger number of students would have achieved higher levels of language proficiency, had they developed motivation and learner autonomy in the right amount, in the course of the STP.

Even when students bring insufficient knowledge into the classroom, they can overcome difficulties, provided they are motivated enough to learn the TL. Only if they are appropriately motivated, they will devote enough time and effort to studying and practising the language. Cognitive theories of motivation suggest that students' expectations regarding success and failure, together with the extent to which they value the learning task, determine the amount of effort they are willing to expend as well as the degree to which they will persist in a learning activity (Wenden, 1991:111).

So, a first area of research should be motivational strategies in the language classroom. L2 motivation research is aimed at understanding the operation of motivational factors in the learning of second languages as well as exploring ways to optimise learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b:183). Learners' attitudes and misconceptions about the language learning process could be altered by a systematic instructional programme, so that they would not hinder students' progress and persistence in language study (Mantle-Bromley, 1995 cited in Larsen-Freeman 2001). Furthermore, motivational strategies might empower students to take control over their own learning.

This leads to the other suggested area of research, autonomy in language learning. Learner autonomy can be broadly defined as the capacity to take control over one's own learning. Learners who lack autonomy are capable of developing it given appropriate conditions and preparation. The conditions for the development of autonomy include opportunities to exercise control over learning. The ways in which teachers organise the practice of teaching and learning therefore have an important influence on the development of autonomy among learners. Research in the area claims that the development of autonomy implies better language learning (Benson, 2001:2). Data-based action research is advocated for investigating learner autonomy in the classroom.

In contrast to experimental research, action research does not necessarily require the 'subjects' of the research to be kept in the dark about the researchers' purposes. The ultimate aim of action research on autonomy is to help learners to become more autonomous. There is, therefore, no reason why learners should not be treated as partners in the action research process.

(ibid:183)

Summing up, The STP has led the researcher to consider deeply these two related issues; the former has to do with affect and the latter with efficacy. Affect and efficacy are closely intertwined, as Oxford (1990:11) claims, and the researcher has taken her words as the motif of the present study, "Language learning is indisputably an emotional and interpersonal process as well as a cognitive and metacognitive affair".

These have been the researcher's interpretations of the outcomes, based on the data presented in Chapter 4. She has tried to be as objective as possible, considering that she did not just only observe the phenomenon occurring in the classroom, but also was involved in the intervention study as a participant researcher.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

"Research is nothing but trying to find answers to questions" (Dörnyei, 2001b:183). Since this study was meant to test how LLS worked to advance language learning in the local context, three research questions, which had already been answered in previous studies, were posed. The findings which emerged from this study contributed to support prior claims. Those questions were as follows:

Can effective language learning strategies be taught?

The intervention study conducted at FI-UNaM proved that LLS can be taught. This can effectively be done through direct integrated strategy instruction in the regular classrooms. Strategy training helps learners become more aware of strategy use and more skilful at utilising effective strategies.

What did the subjects of the research learn in the course of the strategy instruction? Following Richards' taxonomy of micro-skills needed for academic listening (1983, cited in Jordan 1997:180-1), it can be claimed that, in different degrees, the subjects by the end of the STP were able:

1. to identify purpose and scope of lecture, topic of lecture, relationships among units within discourse, role of discourse markers in signalling structure of a lecture
2. to follow topic development
3. to infer relationships
4. to recognise key lexical items related to subject/topic, markers of cohesion, function of intonation to signal information structure
5. to deduce meanings of words from context.

In addition, the subjects developed note-taking skills such as those described in Jordan (1997:179-80):

1. distinguishing between important and less important information
2. deciding when to record the points

3. writing concisely and clearly in a kind of personal shorthand which makes use of various devices, e.g. abbreviation, symbols, special layouts.

Does instruction in language learning strategies actually have an impact on proficiency and achievement in the target language?

Empirical data from the STP confirm the fact that lower-ability learners can become more proficient in the TL. If we take into consideration that their level of proficiency at the beginning of the STP, which according to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (2003), was assumed to correspond to CLB levels 3/4 for listening skills:

Simple structure is mastered at this level. Messages are short and are limited to very basic, daily routine situations. There are frequent errors and often a need for clarification and repetition. Can read and write very short simple texts with recognisable spelling and punctuation. Vocabulary is quite limited.

By the end of the STP, they had definitely shifted to CLB levels 7/8 for listening and writing skills:

Learners have mastered the more complex grammatical structures and have expanded vocabulary to speak and write on a wide variety of everyday topics. They can identify levels of formality and adjust their language to familiar situations. They can offer opinions and advice properly. They can read texts of up to 10 pages on familiar topics or follow complex instructions. They are beginning to use language for academic purposes.

This finding corroborates that the aim of the study was accomplished. Not only did the students improve their level of proficiency in their listening skills, but also managed to progress in their writing skills. Though improvement in reading and speaking skills were not measured in the present study, it may be inferred that the STP had a pervading impact on language improvement.

Can less successful students be taught to use learning strategies in a way which can contribute to higher achievement levels?

LLS are equally effective for good language learners as well as for less successful ones, in the sense that every learner, notwithstanding their current level of proficiency, can progress along the interlanguage continuum with the aid of appropriate strategies. In this study, not everyone

attained an adequate level of achievement. However, almost everyone demonstrated a significant improvement in their language performance, evidenced by the quantity and quality of information in their post-test notes.

These are the contributions which the Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking at the university level has made to SLA²⁷. We are still a long way from fully understanding the multiple intervening variables which foster or hinder L2 acquisition in instructional situations. Once they are comprehended, the following step should be to make the necessary conditions available for L2 learning be thoroughly developed.

Revisiting Horwitz's words stated at the beginning of the present work (p.1), we can conclude that, as shown in the study, there is room for improvement, provided we take into account all the domains involved in language learning; that is, the affective, the social as well as the cognitive domains. The STP proved the proper terrain for the students to realise that enhancing their interlanguage was within their reach. Moreover, they found out that they could achieve higher level of proficiency and achievement in the TL because they had the will to learn.

²⁷ SLA can be defined as the study of the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom (Ellis, 1997:3).

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APPENDIX 1 - Students' Notes**CONTENTS**

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Preface

Why to undertake a Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking?

Although listening is rated as a difficult skill to achieve by many foreign language students, it is a necessary skill to develop in order to be able to use a foreign language. Listening is the previous step to speaking. Unless people are capable of processing language in real time, communication is not possible, and being able to communicate in the target language is the ultimate goal of learning a language.

Note taking is a strategy many of you are used to. You take notes in other subjects at university which will later help you study for a test, you write down a telephone number you are interested in, you write a shopping list before going to the supermarket so that you will not forget what you need to buy. Furthermore, you take notes of a lot of other information you think might be useful later on.

Listening is a mental process. To assess understanding of an oral message students are required to solve a task and this is where note-taking comes in. On the one hand, note-taking helps students to focus their attention on incoming messages, it also helps them organise information which will be more easily remembered later. Furthermore, students can give evidence of their understanding by means of the notes they make, or they can use their notes to produce language by writing an essay or giving an oral presentation.

The Strategy-training Programme is intended to run the first semester this year. You will be having a pre-test and post-test to evaluate the Programme's efficacy. Between both tests, you will learn to listen carefully, to extract and organise relevant information, and to use it in further activities. In order to design the Strategy-training Programme material has been gathered from three different textbooks:

- Academic Listening Encounters by Kim Sanabria (2004). CUP.
- Study Listening: Understanding lectures and talks in English by Tony Lynch (2004). CUP.
- Study Skills in English by Michael Wallace (2004) CUP.

It is the Chair's expectation that you will find this Strategy-training Programme in Listening and Note-taking useful and that you will become better learners of English, using your time and resources more efficiently.

Lic. Gladys G. González Carreras

March, 2007

Listening and Note-taking

A Strategy-training Programme

Date:

An Overview

Strategies:

- Finding out about Language Learning Strategies(LLS)
- Identifying the purpose of the LLS training program
- Setting goals and objectives
- Organising and planning for task
- Making positive statements

Objective:

- To learn what the strategy-training programme consists of
- To find out about one's own learning style

Learning Strategies

Foreign or second language learning strategies (LLS) are specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques students use, often consciously, to improve their progress in apprehending internalising, and using the second language (L2) (Oxford 1990).

Strategies are the tools for active, self-directed involvement needed for developing L2 communicative ability (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

There are three broad types of strategies that are put into practice when learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990):

- Metacognitive Strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self evaluation after the learning activity has been completed.
- Cognitive Strategies are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning material.
- Social-affective Strategies consists in cooperative learning, asking questions for clarification, and self-encouragement²⁸.

²⁸Underlined words and phrases are defined in the glossary section at the end of the handout.

Listening Strategies

To teach effective listening teachers must be aware of how their students approach their learning in general and how they prefer to develop their listening skills. Students can become aware of their listening strategies either through specific learning training sessions or by the teacher's integration of strategy training into the listening lessons (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005).

Learning Styles and Listening Strategies

Learning styles are the approaches students prefer to adopt when learning, and they are generally consistent behaviour. Two main distinctions that emerge in cognitive styles are field-sensitive (FS) and field-independent (FI). Individuals with a FS mode of perception are considered global learners, i.e. they learn holistically rather than discretely. In contrast, FI individuals are regarded as analytic learners because they like to learn step by step (Violand-Sánchez; Kinsella; in Reid 1995).

Task 1

One way to assist students in finding out what kind of learners they are is to administer a learning style questionnaire or quiz. Following Nunan (1996 cited in Flowerdew and Miller, 2005.) score each of the sentences in the questionnaire provided and find out which type of learner you are.

Strategy Training

In language strategy training students become familiar with the general idea of LLS and the way such strategies can help them accomplish various language tasks. It involves learning and practising strategies with actual language tasks. Students learn the significance of particular strategies, when and how to use them, and how to monitor and evaluate their own performance (Oxford, 1990).

Note-taking

Note-taking is a cognitive strategy that serves to create structure for input and output. It helps learners sort and organise the target language information that comes their way. In addition, it allows students to demonstrate their understanding tangibly and prepares them for using the language for speaking and writing (Oxford, 1990).

Lectures

There are different types of lectures. In a university setting, a lecture is normally one of a series given by the same lecturer as part of a degree course. The lecturer usually talks for 45-60 minutes. The student makes notes and may ask questions. In general there are three main types of lectures:

- Reading style: the lecturer either reads aloud from a script or speaks as if they were reading it.
- Conversational style: the lecturer speaks from brief notes, using relatively informal language and probably encourages the students to contribute by asking questions or responding to points in the lecture.
- Rhetorical style: the lecturer speaks about facts but also includes stories, jokes and digressions (Lynch, 2004).

Interviews

An interview is a conversation between two or more people (The interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee. Interviews can be divided into two rough types, interviews for assessment and interviews for information.

The most common type of interview for assessment is a job interview between an employer and an applicant. The goal of such an interview is to assess a potential employee to see if he/she has the social skills and intelligence suitable for the workplace. Similar interviews are also used for admissions to schools, allotment of grants and other areas.

The second class of interviews is that seeking to gather information about a subject. These types of interviews are central to the practices of journalism and instructional design. Such interviews are also important to any non-fiction writer or researcher. In general the quotes and information gathered in these interviews are used in a publication or edited for broadcast²⁹.

²⁹Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interview>. Retrieved November 2006.

Strategies Training Schedule

First week

- An overview of the strategy-training programme
- Learning Styles Quiz

Second week

- Pre-test

Third week

Lesson 1

- Note-taking techniques

Fourth week

Lesson 2

- Lecture Internal Structure

Fifth week

Lesson 3

- Listening to Interviews

Sixth week

Lesson 3

- Listening to Interviews

Seventh week

Lesson 4

- Building Background Knowledge

Eight week

Lesson 5

- Predicting

Ninth week

Lesson 6

- Monitoring

Tenth week

Lesson 7

- Responding

Eleventh week

Lesson 8

- Clarifying

Twelfth week

Lesson 9

- Inferencing

Thirteenth week

Lesson 10

- Evaluating

Fourteenth week

- Post-test

Tasks Description

In this training program you will be dealing with two different topics: *Cultural Change* and *Global Issues*. The first topic discusses the changes in our world that are occurring because of the rapid introduction of new technology. The second one deals with the worldwide trend towards living in an urban environment or city. You will be thinking about the pros and cons of city life.

During these lessons you will be working through three stages of classroom activities to help you increase your ability to understand and take notes on lectures and interviews.

Pre-listening

- Focus on one or more strategies.
- Introductory reading text, or brainstorming ideas about lecture or interview content.
- Focal points of vocabulary or grammar.

First listening

- Guided note-taking for main ideas.

Second listening

- Detailed note-taking.

After listening

- Comparison of notes - content and form

Follow-up

- Critical thinking
- Personal response tasks
- Research work
- Oral presentation

Date:

Lesson 1

Note-taking Techniques

Strategies:

- Creating structure for input
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To write notes faster and more efficiently
- To organise the spoken information in an effective way
- To compare one's performance with others'

General recommendations

In note-taking the listener has to decide the following:

- Step 1 What is being said.
- Step 2 What it means (how it relates to what has been said).
- Step 3 Whether it is important and whether to write it down.
- Step 4 How to write it in note form.

In this decision-making process, the most important part is step 3rd evaluating the importance of the information. Notice that it depends on your knowledge of the topic, rather than on your knowledge of English.

Note-taking is a very personal activity and there is no single best system. There is always more than one way of representing what the speaker has said. Any note-taking system has to be flexible. But there are three basic rules that help make note-taking quicker and more efficient:

- Rule 1 Be selective: decide what is important.
- Rule 2 Be brief: use abbreviations and symbols.
- Rule 3 Be clear: show the interrelationship between the speaker's points.

Using Telegraphic Language

When you listen to a lecture, it is not possible to write down everything the lecturer says. Good note-takers are able to write down the most important information in as few words as possible. Using telegraphic language will help you do this quickly.

Telegraphic language is abbreviated language that reads like newspaper headlines. When you use telegraphic language, you usually don't include the following:

- Articles (*a, an, the*)
- The verb *to be* and other linking verbs
- Prepositions and pronouns

Look at this example of telegraphic language:

Original sentence

The first topic I will discuss is the large increase in the number of students who attend college today compared to the past. There has been a large increase of both male and female students.

Telegraphic language

Topic 1: large incr. in # of Ss in college today compared to past — ♂ & ♀

Notice that the note-taker has also used abbreviations and symbols. Using telegraphic language together with symbols and abbreviations will help you to become a good note-taker.

Using symbols and abbreviations

The quantity of your notes depends partly on individual preferences and the ability to write fast, but mainly on your knowledge of the topic being talked about. It is usually not necessary, or even useful, to try to record every word that is said. Nevertheless, if you are going to take notes efficiently, you will want to save yourself as much writing as possible, and this is where the use of symbols and abbreviations comes in. One obvious point, but one that is easy to forget in taking notes under pressure of time, is to use only symbols and abbreviations that you will be able to remember when you come to revising your notes some time later. Because your notes will be shared in class and the post-test will be marked by your teacher, it will be wise to come to an agreement in the use of symbols and abbreviations within this program.

b) What do these abbreviations mean? As we proceed through the program, we will add more abbreviations useful for the topics we will be dealing with.

[illegible]

(Source: Lynch, 2004; Sanbria, 2004 & Wallace, 2004)

Highlighting

• This strategy emphasises the major points in a dramatic way, through colour, underlining, CAPITAL LETTERS, Initial Capitals, BIG WRITING, **bold writing**, * stars*, boxes circles and so on. The sky is the limit in thinking of ways to highlight (Oxford, 1990).

Organising Input

With reference to rule 3 "*Be clear*" the relationship between ideas in a lecture are important and notes need to reflect them. There are many different ways to take notes. The simplest and most common form being that of raw notes, which are unstructured and untransformed. For raw notes to become useful, learners need to go back immediately (before they forget what was said) and organise the notes using a different system. A better way is to use the *shopping list* or *T-formation* as the very first step, omitting the raw notes. The advantage of using one of these formats initially is that they help learners organise what they hear while they are hearing it, thus increasing the original understanding and the ability to integrate new information with the old.

The *shopping list format* is extremely simple, but it does impose some sort of order and organisation on the spoken material. It involves writing down information in clusters or sets that have internal consistency or meaning. Let us see an example

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Technological progress | | | |
| Examples: | distance medical operation | CD burning | digital photography |
| Equipment: | computerised robots | Internet | |
| Effects: | Pros: | time saving | effort saving |
| | Cons: | too much importance | poor quality interaction |

The *T-formation format* is similar in intent to the shopping list format, but it allows learners to use the space on the paper in a more effective way. First draw a large T on a piece of paper, taking up the whole sheet. Then write the main theme or title on the top line (the crossbar of the T). On the left side of the vertical line, write the basic categories or topics that have been discussed; on the right side of the vertical line, write details, specific examples, comments or follow-up questions. Let us see an example.

| Technological progress | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Examples</i> | distance medical operation CD burning digital photography |
| <i>Equipment</i> | computerised robots Internet |
| <i>Effects</i> | Pros: time saving effort saving Cons: too much importance poor quality interaction |

For the time being, these two examples are enough to start organising audio input.

Task 2

Pre-listening

Global Change

Read the following passage

Today's world is changing faster than ever before. We have seen technological progress in an area we could not have imagined only ten or twenty years ago. Using computerised robots, a surgeon is now able to perform an operation on a patient in a different continent; music lovers can download their favourite music at the touch of a button and then burn their own CDs at home; digital photography allows us to take photographs and transmit them instantly to the other side of the world.

What is the impact of all this technology on the way we interact with each other? Nobody is quite sure yet. Some people have embraced and celebrated new technology, which allows them to save time and effort. Others are not sure if the supposed benefits are actually worth it. They are concerned that new technologies have too much importance in our lives. They believe that some new technologies are having a negative effect on the way people interact with each other.

(From Sanabria, 2004)

Answer the following questions according to the information in the passage.

1. What are some recent innovations in the world of technology?
2. Why are some people in favour of technology?
3. Why are other people concerned about technology's impact?

Read these questions and share your answers with a partner.

1. In what ways has new technology improved your relationships with other people?
2. What is the most difficult experience you have had with new technology?
3. What technological innovations do you think will occur in the next fifty years?

Mini-history of the computer

a. What do you think the recording will be about?

b. Do you know the meaning of these words? Work with a partner. If neither of you know the meaning of them, try and guess

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| computer | abacus | calculating machine | computing |
| machine | | | |
| binary method | AI | keyboard | mouse |
| time-saving device | PC | laptop | chess |

c. Which word is the odd one out?

First listening

As you listen make notes on the main points. Use conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know.

Second listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- You didn't catch what the speaker said.
- You didn't have time to note all the details.
- You misunderstood what was said.

After listening

After hearing the talk, compare the content of your notes with those of another student.

Ask yourself the following:

- a) Have you included the same information?
- b) If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- c) If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- abbreviations
- symbols

- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout (e.g. shopping list or T-formation)*
- *emphasis (such as underlining and capital letters).*

Follow-up

- *Research on **your favourite technological device**. Write a short essay on it (150-200 words).*
- *Give a five-minute talk on the topic.*

Date:

Lesson 2

Lecture Internal Structure

Strategies:

- Creating structure for input
- Analysing expressions
- Paying attention
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To identify discourse markers
- To identify lecture organisation

Identifying discourse markers

One of the most useful ways to understand a spoken or written input is to be aware of the way it is structured or organised. Listening to a lecture, for example, is a bit like finding yourself in an area that is not known to you, but which you have to find your way through. Being aware of the structure of the input is like being given a map of the area – you are much less likely to get lost! We will be discussing the ways in which inputs are structured later, but we will start at a lower level by looking at discourse markers. If the structure is a map, discourse markers are like signposts, which speakers and writers use to point out the direction in which their argument is heading. They serve as signals for the meaning and structure of the lecture, text, etc. They tell us how ideas are organised. So it is very important to be on the lookout for them (see Table 1).

Different discourse makers have different functions. Let us see some examples.

Table 1

| Functions of discourse markers | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The discourse makers may be used for LISTING, for example:</p> <p>firstly secondly in the first place my next point is another (issue...) last/finally</p> <p>2. They may be used to show the CAUSE AND EFFECT relationship between one idea and another:</p> <p>so because therefore since thus (we see...)</p> <p>3. They can indicate that the speaker is going to illustrate his/her ideas by giving an EXAMPLE:</p> <p>for instance let's take... for example an example/instance of this (is...)</p> <p>4. They may introduce an idea which runs against what has been said, or is going to be said (CONTRAST):</p> <p>but and yet nevertheless although on the other hand however whereas despite</p> <p>5. They may be used to express a TIME RELATIONSHIP:</p> <p>then previously next while after that when</p> | <p>6. They may be used to indicate how important something is, That is as a mark of EMPHASIS:</p> <p>It is worth noting... I would like to direct your attention to... A key/crucial issue is...</p> <p>7. They may be used to rephrase what has already been said, or to introduce a DEFINITION:</p> <p>in other words to put it another way by this I mean that is to say let me put it this way</p> <p>8. Speakers often have a number of related points to present, so they use discourse markers to show that they are adding another related idea (ADDITION):</p> <p>in addition furthermore as well I may add that not only...but also moreover</p> <p>9. They may be used to express CONDITION:</p> <p>if assuming that unless on condition that provided providing</p> <p>10. A very important kind of discourse marker to look out for is one which shows that the speaker is about to sum up her/his message, or part of it (SUMMARY):</p> <p>to summarise if I can just sum up it amounts to this What I have been saying is this the gist/essence/core of my argument is...</p> |

Source: Wallace 2004.

Task 1

For each of the following functions, think about which note-taking techniques (such as symbols, abbreviations, layout, underlining, highlighting and use of capital letters) might be useful to you when taking notes from an input that uses these functions. Work in pairs. Compare your choices with other students'.

| Discourse function | Possible note-taking strategy |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. LISTING | Use numbers (1,2,3,...); Take new line for each item in list. |
| 2. CAUSE AND EFFECT | |
| 3. EXAMPLE | |
| 4. CONTRAST | |
| 5. TIME RELATIONSHIP | |
| 6. EMPHASIS | Use block capitals; Underline; Circle word/s. |
| 7. REPHRASE/DEFINITION | |
| 8. ADDITION | |
| 9. CONDITION | |
| 10. SUMMARY | |

Lecture organisation

Now, let us see how a lecture is generally organised.

- The lecturer should start with an overview or **preliminary summary** of the main points of the lecture.
- Then having thus prepared the audience on what to expect, the lecturer should deliver the **main body** of the lecture.
- When this has been done, the lecturer should in the last few minutes review the main points of the lecture in a **final summary**.

Not all lecturers, unfortunately for the listeners, follow this kind of structure. Some like to begin with an anecdote intended to amuse the audience or catch interest. Some like to conclude with one important point that they want their audience to think about. Others will helpfully show the structure of their talk with an overhead

transparency, handout or PowerPoint presentation. Whatever method of presentation is used, it is very important for the listener to try to figure out not only what the information is but also how it is organised.

Task 2

Note-taking: Teleworking and distance learning

Pre-listening

Introduction to the lecture topic

Communication technology, especially email and the Internet, now makes it possible for some employees to work from home using telephone and computer. But Teleworking does not suit everyone, as is shown by recent research.

Reading

Read the five research findings that follow, then discuss with a partner what the missing words could be.

1. *Teleworkers can feel and may have trouble feeling they are part of a*
2. *Teleworkers are more likely to be about how well they are doing their job.*
3. *..... are more frequent when people are communicating by mail and telephone.*
4. *Some teleworkers find that because there is no division between work space and home space, they are more likely to work hours and to find it more difficult to the computer.*
5. *Teleworking can also create problems for the employees 'left behind' at the main office, who may feel of their Teleworking colleagues.*

Discussion

1. *Does anyone in the class have experience of teleworking or telestudying?*
2. *Working with a partner, make a list of the pros and cons of teleworking and telestudying.*

First listening

The speaker is Dr Ron Howard. He used to deliver distance learning courses in Edinburgh for teachers and learners of English as a foreign language.

As you listen make notes on the main points. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Make a conscious effort to pay attention to discourse markers and listen out for definitions and explanations of technical terms. There is a note-frame below that you may want to use to help you follow the talk.

Teleworking (TW) and Distance Learning (DL)

Terminology

Occupations using TW

TW

Adv's

Disadv's

Worker

Employer

Society

DL

Student

*Tutor/
Course organiser*

Conclusion

Second listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Did you notice that Dr. Howard indicated that some of the advantages and disadvantages were more important than others? Pay attention to that aspect of his talk. Add details to your notes where necessary to show the relative importance of the points. You can use highlighting techniques for the purpose.

After listening

A) After listening to the talk, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- a) Have you included the same information?
- b) If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- c) If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Next, compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- abbreviations
- symbols
- telegraphic language
- spatial layout (columns)
- emphasis (such as underlining and capital letters).

B) Then, compare your notes with Dr Howard's own notes which will be shown on the board. Did you cover the most relevant items of the talk?

C) Finally, listen to the lecture again. As you do so, you will also read its transcript.

- a) Circle the marker phrases used to point up the advantages or disadvantages Dr. Howard thought were more important than others.
- b) Work with a partner. Describe how the lecture is organised. Does it follow the ordinary format: Preliminary Summary, Main Body, Final Summary?

Date:

Lesson 3

Listening to Interviews

Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Transferring
- Getting the idea quickly
- Cooperating with peers
- Becoming aware of others' thought and feelings

Objectives:

- To distinguish features that correspond to an interview
- To develop skills that help record information from an interview

Listening Skills

Listening for details

Listening for details is an important skill to practise because it will help you improve your listening comprehension. To do this close listening, you have to concentrate and try not to miss any part of what the speaker is saying.

Listening for specific information

As a student, you will often be asked to answer questions about specific information that you have heard. Preview the questions before you listen so that you know what information to listen for.

Listening for main ideas

Informal interviews and conversations are less organised than lectures. So, when you want to understand the main ideas, you have to think back over the whole interview or conversation and try to figure out what the people were trying to express.

Drawing inferences

Drawing inferences means understanding things that are not directly stated by a speaker. When you listen to people speak, you should not only think about what they tell you directly, but you should also be aware of what they communicate indirectly. Drawing inferences is a critical aspect of listening.

Listening for opinions

a) Expressing degree of certainty

When people are discussing ideas, particularly if they are complex or controversial, you often have to listen closely to understand their opinions. You can hear how strongly a person feels about a topic by listening to the speaker's words and the degree of certainty with which the words are spoken. Here are some examples:

| Degree of Certainty | Speaker's Words |
|---|---|
| The speaker gives an opinion. | <i>I think...</i> <i>I believe...</i> <i>I feel that...</i> <i>In my opinion...</i> |
| The speaker is very sure of his/her opinion. | <i>I really think...</i> <i>I really believe...</i> <i>I'm convinced that...</i> <i>I'm certain that...</i> <i>That's an excellent idea!</i> <i>That's terrible!</i> <i>That's awful!</i> |
| The speaker is not really sure of his or her opinion. | <i>Mmm... well... let me see...</i> <i>Well... maybe...</i> <i>I don't know...</i> <i>I guess...</i> <i>I'm not really sure, but...</i> |

(Source: Sanabria, 2004)

b) Contrasting ideas

When discussing ideas, speakers often need to present different sides of an argument. To do this effectively, they use transitional phrases to distinguish between various viewpoints. To compare different sides of an issue, a speaker might use phrases like these:

... *but I think...*

... *but other people...*

... *but the other thing is...*

... *on the other hand...*

... *however, some people...*

(Source: Sanabria, 2004)

It is important to pay attention to transitional phrases so that you understand both sides of the arguments as well as the opinion of the speaker.

Task 1

You will hear two people discuss how technology has changed the way we interact with other people. Nina, a social worker is unsure about the benefits of computers and the Internet. Kelly, a university student, is more positive about them.

Interview with Nina: Concerns about computers and the Internet

Pre-listening

Step 1

*Here are some words and phrases from the interview with Nina, printed in **bold** and given in the context in which you will hear them. They are followed by definitions. Read them, make sure you understand them.*

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| -The amount of information is absolutely overwhelming | <i>extreme, too much to understand</i> |
| -It's wonderful to have the Internet at your disposal | <i>available to use</i> |
| -an electronic protector that is incompatible with our system | <i>doesn't work with...</i> |
| -They shut down for no apparent reason | <i>obvious</i> |
| -You toss out some news | <i>send out</i> |
| -Computers were touted as a way toward the paperless society | <i>praised, promoted</i> |
| -It was just misrepresented | <i>described inaccurately</i> |
| -Kids... take it for granted | <i>accept it without any questions, without thinking about it</i> |
| They learn it when they're young, and they are not intimidated | <i>frightened, scared</i> |

Step 2

Before you listen to the interview with Nina, read these incomplete excerpts. Notice that at the end of each one, Nina indicates that she is going to present another side of the issue. Think about what she might say.

1. It's fun to spend hours a day surfing the net, investigating something that interests you, but...
2. It's wonderful on one hand to have the Internet at your disposal, but...
3. You get to discuss books with your friends, to share the ideas with others, but...
4. I know a little bit about the Internet, but...
5. I really like e-mail, but...
6. Computers might be great for writing and editing things, and everything looks great and all that, but...

First listening

Listen to Nina describe her feelings about computers and the Internet. As you listen, take notes about the opinions she expresses after each of the excerpt in step 2. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations

Second listening

The teacher will now play the interview a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- *You didn't catch what the speaker said.*
- *You didn't have time to note all the details.*
- *You misunderstood what was said.*

After listening

After hearing the interview, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- d) *Have you included the same information?*
- e) *If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?*
- f) *If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?*

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side. Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- *abbreviations*
- *symbols*
- *telegraphic language*
- *emphasis (such as underlining and capital letters).*

Task 2

Interview with Kelly: The benefits of computers and the Internet

Pre-listening***Step 1***

*Here are some words and phrases from the interview with Kelly printed in **bold** and given in the context in which you will hear them. They are followed by definitions.*

| Term | Definition |
|---|--|
| -E-mail is just so much more convenient | easier |
| -Letters make better keepsakes | small objects that you keep because they remind you of someone or some event |
| -for more extended interaction | longer conversations |
| -I have IM (Instant Messaging) configured | set up on a computer |
| -once you get over initial fear | first, preliminary |
| -just fiddling around with them and testing things out | using them to learn what they are like |
| -My generation is hooked on the Internet | addicted to |
| -It makes a lot of things accessible | available |
| -All of my syllabi for my classes are on line | plural of "syllabus" (Latin) |
| -The Internet could increase the disparities between different classes | levels of society, called 'the digital divide' |
| -Or maybe technology just illuminates existing disparities | highlights, points out. |

Step 2

What do you think Kelly will say about these topics?

computers

e-mail

instant messages

the Internet

books

First listening

Listen to Kelly's interview. As you listen, take notes about the opinions she expresses on the topics in step 2. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know.

Second listening

The teacher will now play the interview a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- You didn't catch what the speaker said.
- You didn't have time to note all the details.

- You misunderstood what was said.

After listening

After hearing the interview, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- g) Have you included the same information?
- h) If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- i) If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side. Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- abbreviations
- symbols
- telegraphic language
- spatial layout
- emphasis (such as underlining and capital letters).

Follow-up

Compare your notes on how Nina and Kelly feel about technology. Draw a graphic organizer. In pairs, prepare a five-minute talk about it.

Date:

Lesson 4

Building Background Knowledge on the Topic

Strategies:

- Organising
- Planning for language task
- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Using non-linguistic clues
- Grouping
- Semantic mapping
- Cooperating with peers

Objective:

- To use world knowledge to understand lectures

When we hear lectures as part of a university course, we use our knowledge of the subject to help us understand what we hear. It is a good idea to do some background reading on the topic before a lecture so that you can become familiar with some of the terms and ideas that are likely to be discussed by the lecturer.

Other ways to get background knowledge include:

- speaking to people who have knowledge about the topic.
- doing research in a library or online.
- seeing a movie about the topic.

One way to become familiar with the technical vocabulary of a particular subject is to try organising it into word groups. Surprisingly, you may find that you understand more than you think you do.

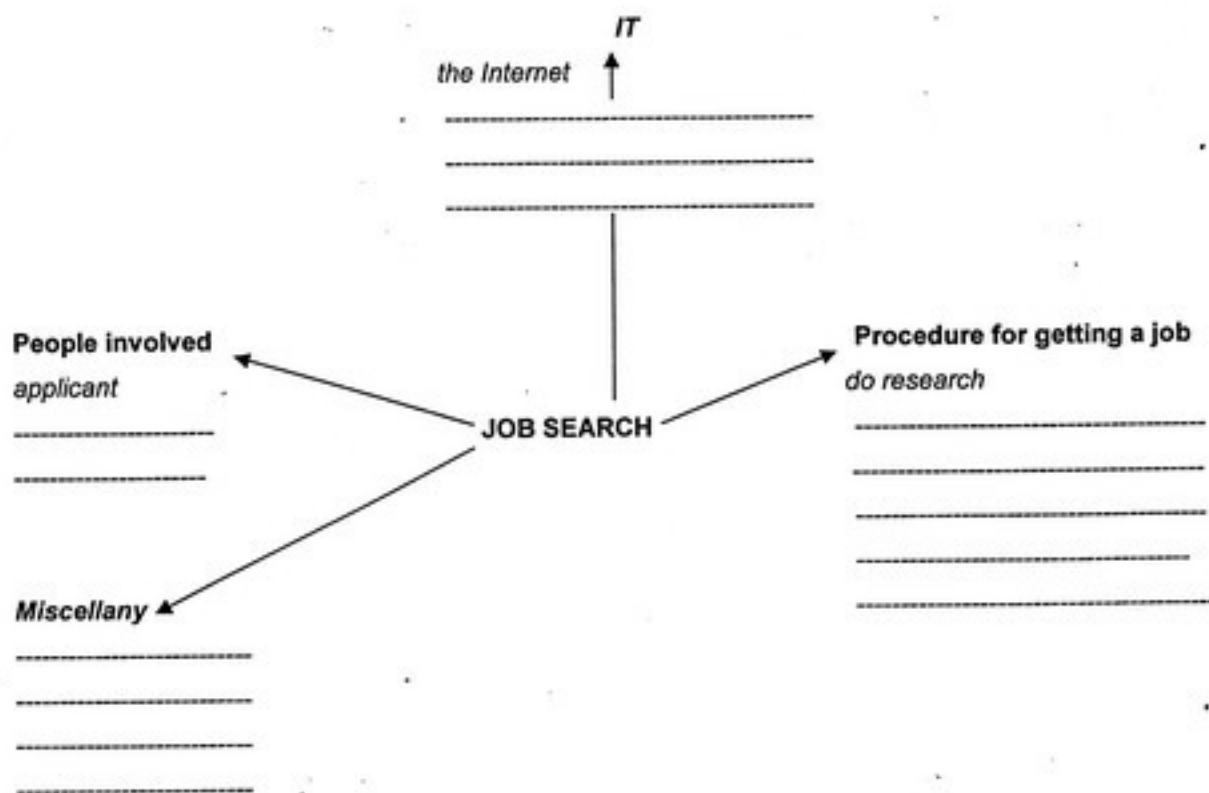
Organising input (continued)

Diagram notes

Diagram notes can take different names such as *word map*, *semantic map*, *mind map*. Basically they are the same because they require students to indicate the main word or idea and to link this with clusters of related words or ideas by means of lines or arrows. See an example below.

Task 1

Look at the word map for organising different kinds of job search vocabulary. Then read the list of words below the word map. Work with a partner and write them in the appropriate word groups of the map. If neither of you know the meaning of them, try and guess! You can add your own ideas to the word map.



| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------|
| apply | application | applicant | employ | employer |
| employee | employment | fax machine | type job application | |
| the Internet | do research | make phone calls | industrial technology | |
| copy information from web page | send job application through e-mail | advanced telecommunication systems | paste information into Microsoft document | |

Task 2

Basic Work Skills necessary in the twenty-first century: Looking for and Applying for a Job

Pre-listening

In this lecture, Graciano E. Matos compares old and new ways to get jobs and discusses the computer skills necessary for work in modern offices.

Step 1

Read the following list of computer skills. Use the list to give a grade to yourself and an older or younger family member or friend.

A= excellent; B= good; C= average; D= very weak; F= failing

| | You | Older or Younger Relative or friend |
|---|-------|--|
| Using e-mail | _____ | _____ |
| Learning to use new software | _____ | _____ |
| Understanding hardware problems | _____ | _____ |
| Creating documents in Microsoft Word | _____ | _____ |
| Doing research online | _____ | _____ |
| Using Spreadsheet | _____ | _____ |
| Creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations | _____ | _____ |
| Making business cards and flyers | _____ | _____ |

Whose grades were higher: yours or those of your relative or friend? Why?

Step 2

Discuss the questions below with a partner. Then share your answer with the class.

- 1. How do computers currently help you in your studies?*
- 2. How do you think you can improve your computer skills?*
- 3. How do you think the Internet can help you look for a job?*

First listening

Listen to Part One of the lecture. As you listen take notes comparing old and new ways to get jobs. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write

down your notes in one of the formats you already know, shopping list, T-format, column, or word map.

Second listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- *You didn't catch what the speaker said.*
- *You didn't have time to note all the details.*
- *You misunderstood what was said.*

After listening

After hearing the lecture, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- *Have you included the same information?*
- *If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?*
- *If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?*

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- *abbreviations*
- *symbols*
- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis (such as underlining and capital letters).*

Follow-up

-Search for job advertisements on the following web sites:

http://www.bumeran.com.ar/aplicantes/area_ingenieria_59.html

<http://clasificados.lanacion.com.ar/INDEX.ASP>

<http://www.trabajoen.com.ar/>

<http://www.550m.com/usuarios/diarioaccion/trabajo/index-27.htm>

<http://www.clarin.com/>

-Find a position that you consider interesting and list the skills required. Do you possess those skills? If not, what could you do to develop them?

-Be ready to present the result of your findings orally.

Date:

Lesson 5

Predicting

Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Taking risks wisely
- Summarising
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To use world knowledge to understand information
- To guess vocabulary from context
- To notice prosodic features to assist in understanding speech
- To use one's notes to answer questions
- To summarise what you have heard

We make predictions all the time. For example, we predict how long it will take to write an email, or how a friend will react to some news we have to give them, or what will be in the morning's newspaper headlines.

When listening to a foreign language we can use two main types of information to help us to predict what is going to be said next.

Background knowledge

- general knowledge of the world
- knowledge of the foreign culture
- specific subject knowledge

Context

- the situation (Who is speaking, where and when)
- The co-text – What has been said so far (linguistic knowledge)

Guessing ahead in this way is particularly relevant in listening. You can use your subject knowledge to help you predict what the speaker is likely to say. In this lesson you will be using what you already know to help predict what might be included in a lecture on *getting and keeping a job*.

Using your notes to answer questions

One reason for taking notes is for you to remember well enough to answer questions on a test. Sometimes in college classes you are given the questions you will be asked before you hear a lecture. Thinking about these questions ahead of time will help you focus on the main ideas and important details as you listen to the lectures and take notes.

Using your notes to write a summary

Summarising is an essential study skill. It means reducing a whole lecture (or part of a lecture) to a few sentences. A good summary shows that you have understood what the lecture is about and what the most important points are. It is a helpful record for you to review when you are studying for a test. Use your notes to help you write your summary. Reread your notes and select the most important points that the lecturer made. Write a summary in which you explain the main points in your own words.

Listening for stress and intonation

It is important to learn to pay attention to a speaker's stress and intonation because they are a central part of the speaker's message. The stress and intonation patterns that a lecturer uses can help you to understand the lecture. There are several basic patterns in spoken English that you need to be familiar with:

1. A loud or emphasised word can indicate the importance of one particular idea. It can also show contrast between two ideas.
2. A rising tone often indicates that the speaker is asking a question.
3. A falling tone indicates that the speaker is making a statement or has completed a list.

As you begin to notice these patterns, you will find that they can help you understand the structures of a lecture and its important points. This will make it easier for you to take good notes.

Task 1

Work with a partner take turns reading the following sentences aloud. These are sentences taken from Part One of Graciano E. Matos' lecture.

- Listen to the sentences
- Circle the words speaker stresses
- Draw arrows to show rising or falling intonation the speaker uses.
- Repeat what you hear.

1. Well, what are the skills that you need?
2. Then you decided where you are going to apply, put your résumé with a cover letter in a stamped envelope, and waited anxiously for someone to get back to you.
3. In fact technology has not so much changed the process as enhanced it.
4. You can research employment not just in your city, but also in your state, your region, your country, and even other countries.
5. In addition to using newspapers and the phone, the Internet has become the tool of preference for getting more details on job openings, applications, and other necessary information.

Task 2

Basic Work Skills necessary in the twenty-first century: Getting and Keeping a Job

Pre- Listening

Read the following questions about Part Two of Graciano E. Matos' lecture. Think about what kind of information you will need to answer them.

1. Why must an applicant be able to participate well in an interview?
2. Which basic computer skills are expected in an office environment today?
3. How was information stored in the past? How is it stored today?
4. What are some ways to acquire or improve the skills you need?

First listening

Listen to Part two the lecture. As you listen, take notes using the questions above as a guide to help you listen for the important points. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know. Pay attention to Mr. Matos' stress and intonation to help understand the lecture.

Second listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- *You didn't catch what the speaker said.*
- *You didn't have time to note all the details.*
- *You misunderstood what was said.*

After listening

After hearing the lecture, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- *Have you included the same information?*
- *If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?*
- *If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?*

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side. Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- *abbreviations*
- *symbols*
- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis*

Follow-up

- a) *Use your notes to answer the questions in step 1. Answer them as fully as you can. Share your answers with a partner. Take turns explaining them orally.*
- b) *Write a one-paragraph summary of part one and two of the lecture. Use your notes to write it. Include these words in your summary:*

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>traditional</i> | <i>computer</i> | <i>research</i> | <i>skills</i> |
| <i>apply</i> | <i>interview</i> | <i>technology</i> | <i>acquire</i> |

Date:

Lesson 6

Monitoring

Strategies:

- Paying attention
- Getting the idea quickly
- Using linguistic clues
- Using other clues
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To guess vocabulary from context
- To draw inferences
- To recognise discourse markers functions

Monitoring, which means checking or observing, plays an important role in effective listening. Effective listeners check whether they correctly understand the meaning of whole chunks of the message, monitor any confusion they encounter and correct inaccurate guesses.

When you are reading, you can always go back and read something again if you find it hard to understand. But listening is more difficult in this respect. In a conversation you may be able to ask the speaker to repeat or explain, but this not the case in one-way listening, as it is a recorded lecture.

On the other hand, you can expect the speaker to keep more or less to the same subject. But there will also be points where he/she 'changes direction', for example, presenting contrasting opinions on the subject, or giving examples that contradict each other.

Monitoring includes asking yourself these questions:

- Have I heard that correctly?
- Have I understood what the speaker meant?
- Have I understood why the speaker said it?
- Has the speaker changed topic?
- What is the speaker going to say next?

Task 1

Listen carefully to the text that the teacher is going to read out. There may be some words you don't recognise, and points where you have to change mind about meaning. Concentrate on the monitoring questions shown as bullet points above. Make notes on what you hear. When the teacher stops, say what you think will come next.

Task 2**Pre-listening****Step 1**

Fill the chart with your opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of life in urban, suburban, and rural environment. Use the list on the right to help you. It shows some of the different factors that affect our quality of life.

| | Urban environment | Suburban environment | Rural environment |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| A d v a n t a g e s | | Suburbs are usually safe. | |
| D i s a d v a n t a g e s | Cities can be very dirty. | | |

**Some factors
That affect
Quality of life**

- Beauty
- Cleanliness
- Convenience
- Education
- Employment
- Entertainment
- Family life
- Pace of life
- Safety
- Transportation

Step 2

Share your ideas in a small group. Add the ideas of the other group members to your chart.

First listening

Interview with Barbara: Life in the city, country and suburbs

- Barbara is a middle-aged woman, where do you think she likes living?
- Among the expressions you will hear in the interview to Barbara are:

To escape from the urban ills:

Unless you like to **putter around** and build things:

Besides, the country has **bugs**:

You are being **stung**:

People who like a lot of stimulation, you know, can't **hack it**:

The whole car culture thing **kicks in**:

In the country and suburbs, you're **labelled**:

Do you know any of these expressions? Try to figure out their meaning. As you listen, notice them in the text. Before the second listening, we will discuss what they mean.

Second listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. As you listen take notes filling in the chart with Barbara's opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of life in the city, country and suburbs. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. If necessary, you will hear the recording a third time.

| | Urban environment | Suburban environment | Rural environment |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| A d v a n t a g e s | <i>Interactive social life</i> | | |
| D i s a d v a n t a g e s | | <i>There's nothing to do</i> | |

After listening

After hearing the interview, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourself the following:

- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Follow-up

Work with a partner. Here are some relevant questions on the interview. Look at them and find if you can answer them with the information in your notes. Remember, you will have to answer them from Barbara's viewpoint.

1. What is interesting about living in a city?
2. What happens when city people go to the country?

3. *Why are cars so important in the country?*
4. *What are the pros and cons of the suburbs?*
5. *Is city life lonely? Is it dangerous?*
6. *Do you agree with Barbara's opinion? Why/Why not?*

Date:

Lesson 7

Responding

Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Reasoning deductively
- Taking risks wisely
- Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings
- Cooperating with peers
- Discussing your feelings with someone else

Objectives:

To think critically about what has been said

To give one's own opinions on a topic

Being an effective listener in the classroom involves not simply receiving what the teacher or the speakers in a recording say but also *responding* to it. *Responding* here means relating the topic to your knowledge and personal experience, and forming your own opinions. It requires asking yourself questions such as:

- Do I accept that what is being said is true and relevant?
- Can I think of other examples that support, or don't support what is being said?
- Do you think that other people's opinions are reasonable?

Thinking critically about the topic

You will not always agree with what you read or hear. Make it a habit to evaluate what other people say and compare it with your own knowledge and experience. One way to practise thinking critically about an issue is to argue both in favour of it and against it. After doing this, you may find that you still strongly hold your original opinion, or you may find that you have changed your mind.

Sharing your opinion

An issue becomes more important if you share your own opinions about it. Your ideas will probably be influenced by many factors, including your age, educational experience,

and cultural background. It is likely that people with backgrounds different from yours will have different opinions.

Supporting your opinion

If you are able to support your opinion, your audience will respect you because you are showing them that you have thought about the topic in depth and can develop your argument. Support for your ideas consists of explanations and examples. You should have at least two or three pieces of supporting information. You can introduce and link your supporting information with transitional phrases, such as these:

- *first / first of all / first and foremost / to begin with*
- *in addition / additionally / secondly / furthermore / moreover / also / then / as well as*
- *finally / and last but not least*

Task 1

Read these questions and share your answers with a partner

1. *What features of city life appeal to you?*
2. *What features of city life do you dislike?*

Task 2

Interview with Kenny: Pros and cons of city living

Pre-listening

- a) *Here are some words and phrases from the interview with Kenny printed in bold and given in the context in which you will hear them. Try to elicit the meaning of them. Work with a partner.*

*What finally **drove me out** was the traffic:*

*I felt like I was **trapped**:*

*I didn't want them **cheering for** different sports teams:*

*I have my **ups and downs**:*

*My mother was **dropping my daughter off**:*

- *What percentage did you guess correctly?*

b) Match the expressions in *bold* on the left with their definitions on the right.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. This is just a law-abiding grandmother | a. rocks |
| 2. Other people complain about graffiti | b. rainy |
| 3. Give me some trees, streams, boulders and animals | c. Someone who obeys the law |
| 4. On grey drizzly days | d. mixes with |
| 5. The grey of the buildings blends in with the grey of the sky | e. writing on walls |

First listening

Listen to the interview with Kenny about the pros and cons of city life. As you listen take notes. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know. Which format do you think is appropriate to show pros and cons?

Second Listening

The teacher will now play the interview a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- You didn't catch what the speaker said.
- You didn't have time to note all the details.
- You misunderstood what was said.

After listening

After hearing the interview, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourselves the following:

- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side. Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- abbreviations
- symbols

- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis*

Follow-up

Compare your notes on both interviews, Barbara's and Kenny's. What similarities and differences can you find? Draw a graphic organiser to show them.

Now have a look at your own chart in the previous lesson on advantages and disadvantages of life in urban, suburban, and rural environments. Do you still hold your original opinion, or have you changed your mind? Work in small groups. Explain your opinion using transitional phrases to link your supporting information. Be ready to answer questions about what you have said.

Date:

Lesson 8

Clarifying

Strategies:

- Paying attention
- Using resources
- Self-monitoring
- Asking for clarification or verification
- Cooperating with peers
- Cooperating with proficient users of the target language

Objectives:

- To ask for help
- To use different resources to get information
- To increase one's knowledge on a topic

In conversation, when someone says something we can't hear, we ask them to say it again. If we don't understand what someone says, we ask them to explain what they mean. This process is called clarification.

In a recorded message, it's more difficult to get points clarified. If you find there are parts of a speech that you can't understand because the speaker is speaking quickly, the ideas are difficult, or you don't see the connection between different parts of what was said, **don't panic!**

Develop a system that you can use during the listening session for noting down ideas or words that you need to check. The fastest way is to use circles, question marks, or asterisks to mark problem items. After the recording is finished, make notes of your questions in the margin. Your questions could involve minor items, such as spelling, or major items, such as comprehension of an idea or opinion.

Take the time to clarify any information that you don't understand. Most teachers encourage students to ask questions. Besides, you can try to clarify anything that you don't understand by asking your classmates, looking in your textbook, or doing research in a library or online.

Clarifying expressions**Not hearing what was said**

I didn't catch the word used for...(X).

I didn't hear what was said about...(X).

I didn't catch what was said just before... (X).

What was the term used for...(X)?

Not understanding what was said

I didn't get what was said about...(X).

I haven't quite grasped what was said about...(X).

I'm not really clear about (X). Could you give us an example?

Not seeing the connection

I don't quite see how (X) relates to (Y).

I can't really see the link between (X) and (Y).

I don't see why (X) is relevant to (Y).

The way to make Clarifying most effective is to combine it with the strategy of Monitoring. Monitor what you are confident you have understood as the recording is going on, and listen out for points where you don't catch or can't understand what the speaker says.

Using your notes to ask questions and make comments

Many professors at university expect you to ask questions and make comments during or after their lectures. In this way, information can be clarified and a variety of opinions can be introduced that increase the depth of the discussion and make it more interesting.

Apart from writing questions in the margins to remind you to clarify information that you did not understand, you can also use the margin to write comments that you would like to make. Here are some reasons you might want to ask a question or make a comment:

- You didn't understand something the speaker said and want clarification.
- You would like additional information about some point of the lecture.
- You want to contribute additional information about a point of the lecture.

- You disagree with something the speaker said and want to discuss it.
- You agree with something the speaker said and want to express your support.

Even if you don't have a question or comment, it is a good idea to take notes on questions and comments of other students. You should also take notes on the lecturer's response and any class discussion that follows. This will increase your knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Using handouts to help you take notes

It is common for lecturers to distribute handouts to accompany their lectures. The handouts might include charts or graphs, an outline, or a bibliography or suggesting reading list. When you are given a handout before a lecture, study it carefully. Handouts will give you a preview of some of the ideas the lecturer will discuss.

A lecturer's handouts will help you understand the lecture and give you material that you can study later. However, lecturers rarely give you exactly the same information in the lecture as they do in handouts. Therefore, you must still listen carefully to understand what the speaker says.

Here are some ways that you can take notes on handouts as you listen to a lecture:

- Highlight or circle parts of the handout that the lecturer discusses.
- Mark information that you don't understand and want to ask questions about.
- Write comments.

Remember to take notes in your usual way in addition to marking the handouts. Be sure to organise all your notes in a clear format.

Task 1

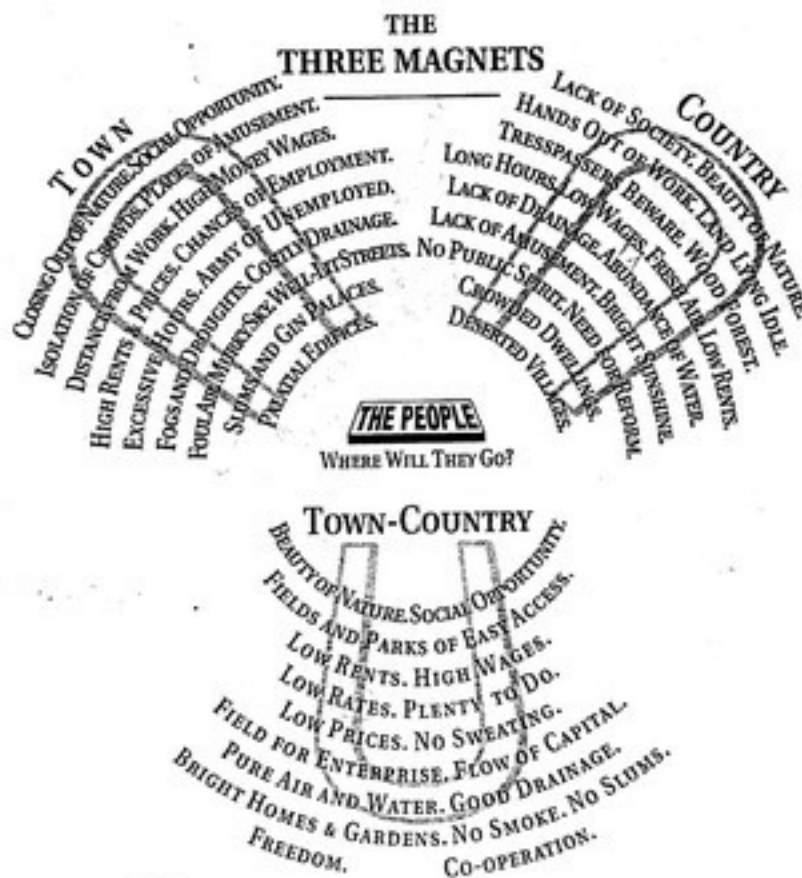
Our Changing Cities

Pre-listening

Step 1

Work with a partner. Look at handout 1 below for Part One of the lecture. It is taken from a book by Ebenezer Howard written over a hundred years ago. Because it was written so long ago, some of the vocabulary may seem unfamiliar, but don't be concerned. As you study the handout, you will see many words and concepts that you can understand.

- Highlight the ideas or vocabulary that you can understand
 - Discuss the following questions
- a) Howard calls the places he presents "Town", "Country" and "Town-Country". What kind of places do you think these correspond to today?
- b) According to Howard's model, which place seems to have the most advantages? Do you agree?
- c) Why do you think Howard chose the image of the magnets to illustrate his ideas?

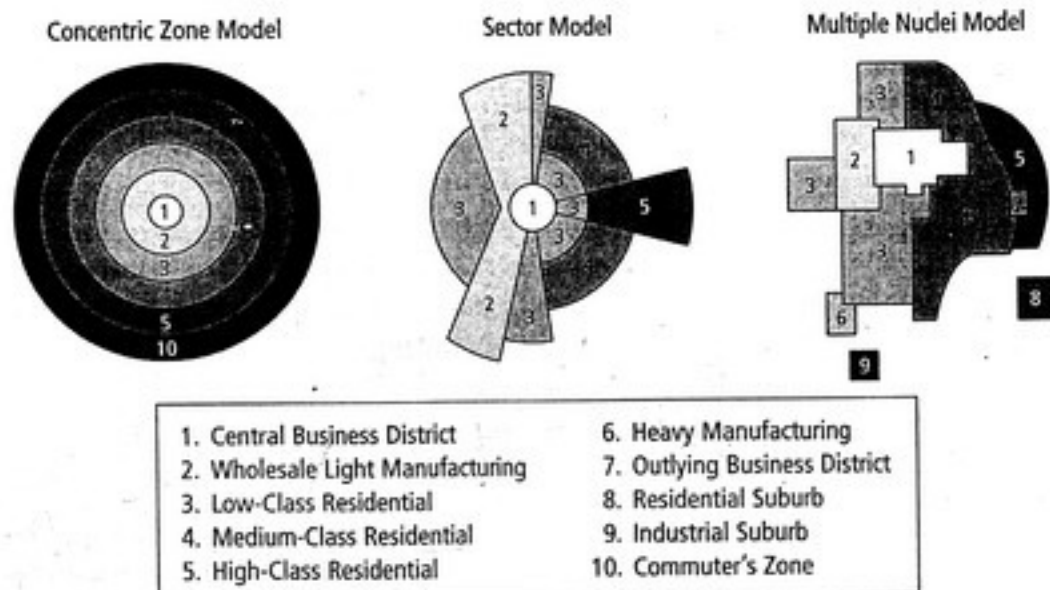


Source: MIT Press, 1965

Step 2

Look at handout 2 below from Part two of the lecture. During the past century, different models have been drawn to show the way cities grow and spread. The three models in this handout are among the best known.

- *Work with your partner. Find out the meaning of any vocabulary that you don't know. You can do that by guessing the meaning from context, taking risks wisely, using linguistic clues, or other clues (remember all these are strategies we have already worked with).*



Source: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1945

- *Discuss the following questions. Again, work with a partner.*
 - How would you describe the differences between the three models?*
 - Have a look at the map of Oberá City which has been provided. Does it look similar to any of these three models? How is it similar or different?*

First listening

Listen to two excerpts from the lecture, one from Part One and one from Part Two. Circle the parts of the handouts that the lecturer refers to. At the same time, take your own notes. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of formats you already know.

Second Listening

The teacher will now play the two excerpts a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- *You didn't catch what the speaker said.*
- *You didn't have time to note all the details.*
- *You misunderstood what was said.*

After listening

After hearing the two excerpts, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourselves the following:

- *Have you included the same information?*
- *If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?*
- *If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?*

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- *abbreviations*
- *symbols*
- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis*

Follow-up

- *Do you need any clarification?*
- *Would you like to make any comments on the task, or topic?*
- *Do research and collect some information on how your hometown grew over time. Make a five-minute oral presentation.*

Date:

Lesson 9

Inferencing

Strategies:

- Overviewing and linking with already known material
- Guessing intelligently
- Using linguistic clues
- Using non-linguistic clues
- Transferring
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To overcome knowledge limitation of the target language
- To understand a lot of language through systematic guessing

Inferencing is really just a more academic word for guessing. In fact, guessing is an essential part of listening, even in our first language. It helps us cope with situations such as when any of these happen:

- The information the speaker gives is incomplete.
- We hear a familiar word, but used in an unfamiliar way.
- We can't hear what the speaker is saying.

An effective listener, especially when listening to a foreign language, regularly uses guessing as a main strategy.

Previously gained knowledge of the target language, the learner's own language, or some other language can provide linguistic clues to the meaning of what is heard or read.

- Suffixes, prefixes and word order are useful linguistic clues for guessing meaning.

In addition to clues coming purely from knowledge of language, there are clues from other sources.

- Non-verbal behaviour, such as the speaker's tone of voice, facial expression, emphasis and body language (gestures, distance, posture, and relaxation versus tension) helps learners understand what is being said.

- Knowing what has already been said frequently gives important information for getting the meaning of what is currently being said and for anticipating what will be said.
- Perceptual clues concerning the situation aid the listener's understanding. These clues can be audible or visual.
- Another important source of clues to meaning is the text structure, that is, introductions, summaries, conclusions, titles, transitions, and ways of dividing the text. It is possible to obtain many clues by noticing the speaker's structural, organisational use of words, phrases, numbers, and letters that indicate importance or priority; for instance, *first...*, *second...*, *third...*; *the most important idea is...*; or *the two main points are...* Structural clues are often given, like *By way of introduction*; *We will now turn to...*; *So far we have covered...*; and *In conclusion*. Graphs, pictures, tables and appendices can help readers get an idea of the meaning.
- General background knowledge (including knowledge of the target culture, knowledge of the topic under discussion, and general world knowledge of current affairs, arts, politics and literature) helps language learners to make guesses about what they hear or read. Research indicates that associating newly heard information with prior knowledge is a powerful and very frequently used way to guess the meaning of a listening passage. All listeners make mental association with prior knowledge, but when compared with ineffective listeners, good listeners make more of these associations, make them more personally meaningful, and intentionally use them for guessing.

Task 1

Reasons People Move to Cities

Pre-listening

Guessing Vocabulary from Context

Step 1

*The following items contain some important vocabulary from the lecture. Work with a partner. Using the context and your knowledge of related words, take turns trying to guess the meanings of the words in **bold**.*

___ **1** we are going to discuss the mass **urbanisation** of the world's population.

- ___ 2 ... which is an **unprecedented** trend worldwide.
- ___ 3 The town has "social opportunity" but "**isolation**".
- ___ 4 Until the twentieth century, the major source of employment was **farming**.
- ___ 5 Jobs are being created in **manufacturing**.
- ___ 6 Jobs are being created in **financing**.
- ___ 7 There are transportation **networks**.

Step2

Work with a partner. Match the vocabulary terms with their definitions by writing the letter of each definition below in the blank next to the sentence or phrase containing the correct term in step 1. Check your answers with those of other partners.

- a. raising animals or growing fruits and vegetables to sell
- b. making products in factories
- c. movement to the cities
- d. something that has never happened before
- e. systems of roads, buses, trains that cross and connect with each other
- f. separation from other people; loneliness
- g. management of money

First Listening

Listen to the lecture 'Reasons People Move to Cities' and take notes. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know.

Second Listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- You didn't catch what the speaker said.
- You didn't have time to note all the details.
- You misunderstood what was said.

After listening

After hearing the lecture, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourselves the following:

- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?

- *If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?*

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- *abbreviations*
- *symbols*
- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis*

Follow-up

Do research and find out some facts about your family history. Choose one of your parents. Inquire where your grandparents lived when they got married and what they did for a living. Give a five-minute talk about it.

Date:

Lesson 10

Evaluating

Strategies:

- Inferencing
- Self-monitoring
- Cooperating with peers

Objectives:

- To gauge one's progress in listening skills
- To gauge one's progress in note-taking

Evaluating your listening - that is, thinking about how well you have understood what someone has said - is an important strategy. It involves judging either general language progress or progress in any of the four skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Listeners can check with the speaker to determine whether what they understood is really accurate. They can estimate what percentage of a listening passage has been understood. They can assess whether they are at the stage of listening comprehension they expected or wanted to be at this time. Students can consider whether their listening has improved since last week, or last month based on what they understand.

Evaluating also consists in deciding what was unclear and why it was unclear. There are five factors that can make listening difficult:

- The physical setting: for instance the acoustics may not help, or there may be background noise.
- The speaker: people have different accents and the listener must get accustomed to them.
- The subject matter: Listeners may or may not be familiar with the topic under discussion.
- The language: there may be gaps in the listener's knowledge of the language that is being spoken.
- The listener: for example, you might be unable to take notes in a particular occasion because you are worried about something and can't concentrate. What other 'internal' listener factors do you think influence your success in listening?

Task 1

Evaluating your listening

Discuss your answers to these evaluation questions in small groups

1. *How good is your listening, compared to that of other people in the class?*
 - a) *weaker than most*
 - b) *about average*
 - c) *better than most*
 - d) *better than anybody else*
 - e) *it depends*
2. *How about your note-taking? Which do you think it is?*
 - a) *not as good as most people's*
 - b) *about average for the class*
 - c) *better than most*
 - d) *best in the class*
3. *How much do you think you need to understand, in order to be able to take effective notes?*
 - a) *less than 25%*
 - b) *25-50%*
 - c) *50-75%*
 - d) *more than 75%*

Task 2

Pre-listening

Changes in the city

Step 1

How many of these words or expressions do you know?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Megacities | 2. urban sprawl | 3. income level |
| 4. homogeneous | 5. destitute conditions | 6. vibrant nightlife |

Step 2

Work with a partner. Match the expressions above with their definition below, by combining the numbers with the letters.

- a. exciting b. uncontrolled growth of cities c. all the same
d. very poor and hopeless e. the amount of money that people make f. huge cities

1-f,

Step 3

Choose three expressions and write meaningful sentences with them. Share them with the class.

First listening

Listen to the lecture on 'Changes in the Cities'. As you listen take notes. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you already know.

Second Listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- You didn't catch what the speaker said.
- You didn't have time to note all the details.
- You misunderstood what was said.

After listening

After hearing the lecture, compare the content of your notes with those of another student. Ask yourselves the following:

- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- If there were points (words or sections) that neither of you could understand, can others in the class help?

Now compare the form of your notes. For this you will need to put them side-by-side.

Look for differences between the ways in which you have used:

- abbreviations
- symbols
- telegraphic language
- spatial layout

- *telegraphic language*
- *spatial layout*
- *emphasis*

Follow-up

Exchange your notes with another partner. Use this checklist below to evaluate your partner's notes. Check (☐) the skills your partner used.

| Note-taking skills | |
|--------------------|--|
| | <i>Identifying main ideas and supporting details</i> |
| | <i>Using symbols and abbreviations</i> |
| | <i>Using telegraphic language</i> |
| | <i>Organising notes in a clear format</i> |
| | <i>Identifying anything that was not clear</i> |
| | <i>Writing questions and comments</i> |

Date:

Assessing your Learning

Strategies:

- Predicting
- Inferencing
- Self-monitoring
- Note-taking
- Self-evaluating
- Making positive statements

Objective:

- To evaluate and rate students' progress in listening and note-taking
- To compare the pre-test and post-test results
- To get students' impressions on the Strategy-training Programme they have gone through

This is the final step in this Strategy-training Programme on Listening and Note-taking. By means of this programme you have learned how to listen accurately to lectures and interviews and how to record relevant information from them. The ultimate goal of this programme has been to enhance your learning of English as a foreign language at university level. I hope you have as much enjoyed it as found it useful!

First, you will take a post-test to assess your performance in listening and note-taking. The result of it will be compared with that of the pre-test you did at the beginning of the programme. The mark you get will be officially recorded in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the subject.

Second, you will answer a questionnaire on your impressions on the Strategy-training Programme. Please, be as truthful as possible since the data collected from them will be used in further implementation of the programme.

Third, a few of you will be chosen to take part in an interview to collect more personal impressions on the Strategy-training Programme which will enrich our research more thoroughly. Be willing to participate!

And last, but not least, I would like to express my gratefulness for your participation in the experiment. I know it hasn't been easy most of the time, but I hope it has helped you become better learners of English. **Thanks to all!**

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APPENDIX 2 - Learning Styles Questionnaire**How do you like to learn?**

For each of the following types score yourself 0, 1, 2, or 3, in the brackets, to show how you like to learn best.

0 = no

1 = occasionally

2 = usually

3 = yes

Type 1

I like to learn by watching and listening to native speakers. []

I like to learn by talking to friends in English. []

At home, I like to learn by watching TV and/or DVD in English. []

I like to learn by using English out of class. []

I like to learn English words by hearing them. []

I like to learn by having conversations. []

TOTAL []

Type 2

I like the teacher to explain everything to us. []

I want to write everything in my notebook. []

I like to have my own textbook. []

In class, I like to learn by reading. []

I like to study grammar. []

I like to learn English words by seeing them. []

TOTAL []

Type 3

In class, I like to learn by playing games. []

In class, I like to learn by looking at pictures and movies and videotapes. []

I like to learn English by talking in pairs. []

At home, I like to learn by using CDs []

In class, I like to listen to CDs and record our performance. []

I like to go out with the class and practise English. []

TOTAL []

Type 4

I like to study grammar. []

At home, I like to learn by studying English books. []

I like to study English by myself (alone) []

I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes []

I like the teacher to give us problems to work on. []

At home, I like to learn by reading online newspapers in English []

GRAND TOTAL []

Add up your score for each section and put a number in the Total box. The highest total shows what kind of learner you are.

Look at the description below:

Type 1: If you have a high score in this section, you are probably a good communicator. You enjoy interacting with people and using the English you have learned in a natural way.

Type 2: If you have a high score in this section, you probably enjoy learning English in class. You like the teacher to lead you through learning the language.

Type 3: If you have a high score in this section, you probably enjoy learning English by examples. You like learning with other people and you see learning a language as fun.

Type 4: If you have a high score in this section, you probably like learning English by studying it in detail. You like to work by yourself and find out how to use the language on your own.

(Slightly adapted from Flowerdew & Miller, 2005:66-7)

APPENDIX 3 - Pre-test Instruments

Pre-Test

Listening and Note-taking

Pre-Listening

Changes in a town

You will hear part of a recorded interview between a student and a local historian, Peter Newnham. Mr. Newnham will talk about the changes that the town has gone through in the last 50 years.

Step 1

Focus on grammar

Do you remember the grammar rules for making comparison in English?

Comparative and superlative adjectives

| | Adjective | Comparative | Superlative |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Regular | | | |
| (1 syllable) | hot small few young | hotter smaller fewer younger | the - hottest smallest fewest youngest |
| (2 syllables ending in -y) | busy happy friendly easy | busier happier friendlier easier | the - busiest happiest friendliest easiest |
| (2 or more syllables) | useful Important difficult popular | more - useful important difficult popular | the most - useful important difficult popular |
| Irregular | good bad much / many little | better worse more less | the - best worst most least |

USE

EXAMPLES

We use **than** after a comparative adjective.

Athens is hotter than Paris.

We use **much** or **a lot** before a comparative to show a bigger difference.

*London is a lot wetter than Madrid.
Moscow is much colder than Paris.*

We use **the** before a superlative adjective.

Spain has the sunniest climate.

(From *International Express* by L. Taylor, 2002)

Step 2

What do you think Mr. Newnham will say? Tick (✓) or cross (X) the sentences.

1. The town has grown bigger.
2. Old buildings have been recycled.
3. There is a wider variety of sports facilities
4. Food preferences have changed.
5. Traffic has become chaotic.
6. The town is cleaner.

Step 3

The following items contain some important vocabulary from the interview. Using the context and your knowledge of related words, try to elicit the meanings of the words in **bold**.

- ___ 1 ...many buildings have been **knocked down** and new ones built in their place...
- ___ 2 ...but I'm afraid **it can't be helped**.
- ___ 3 We just have **to put up with it**.
- ___ 3 ...**soccer** was about the only sport that people watched or played.
- ___ 4 ...there are more parking restrictions as well as **pedestrianised areas**...
- ___ 5 People often complain about the **litter** in the streets...
- ___ 6 ...and it always young people that **get the blame** for that.

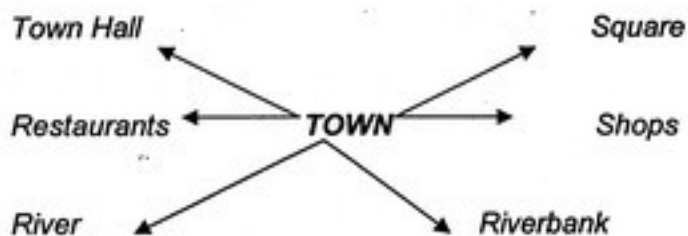
Step 4

Match the vocabulary terms with their definitions by writing the letter of each definition below in the blank next to the sentence or phrase containing the correct expression in step 3.

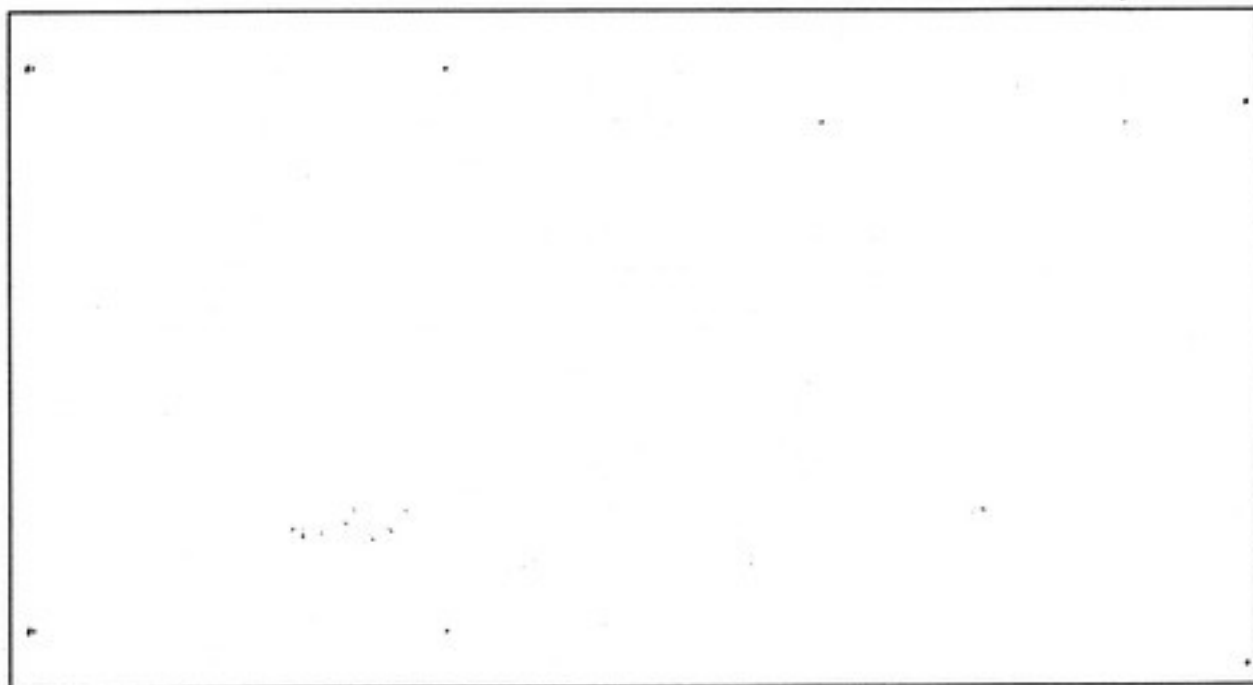
- a) to accept and unpleasant situation
- b) Football
- c) Demolish
- d) Make someone responsible for something bad
- e) Rubbish
- f) Nothing can be done about it.
- g) Streets where people can walk

Step 5

Here is a word map that referred to parts of a town. They will be heard during the interview. Do you know the meaning of these words?



In the box provided, draw a street of the town with the places mentioned. Label them.



Now, do your test.

Facultad de Ingeniería

Taller de Inglés 2

Name:

Date:

Pre-test

Listening and note-taking

You will listen to the interview 'Changes in a Town' twice. As you listen take notes in the note-frame provided. Submit it.

Changes in a Town

Physical features:

People's lifestyle:

Traffic:

Environment:

Pre-test Transcript**Changes in a town**

Student: Thank you very much for agreeing to let me interview you, Mr Newnham. It'll really help me with my local history project.

Peter: I'm glad to help.

Student: First of all, can you tell me what you think has been the biggest change in our town over the last 50 years or so?

Peter: Well, I suppose the biggest change is that it's physically much, much larger. And, of course, a lot more people live here now. In fact, most of the town is actually unrecognisable compared with fifty years ago.

Student: Why is that?

Peter: It's because so many buildings have been knocked down and new ones built in their place, so the whole appearance of the town has changed. A lot of this was unnecessary and very regrettable, in my view, but I'm afraid it can't be helped. We just have to put up with it.

Student: What about people's lifestyle – how has that changed?

Peter: Well, there is a lot more choice nowadays than there used to be. Just as an example, fifty years ago, soccer was about the only sport that people watched or played. But now we've got facilities for American football, baseball, basketball and even ice-hockey. And we've got our own basketball team as well as a football team.

Student: A lot of people said that the culture of the USA has had a big influence. Do you agree?

Peter: Yes, but that's nothing new. What's happening now is not so much the influence of one country, but that people want to adopt things from all over the world, from Europe and Asia as well. People travel much more nowadays and see things they like in other countries and try to copy them. And our town now has a lot of people who originally came from other countries. All this has had a big effect on the choice of food you can buy in restaurants and shops – and a very positive one, I think. Also, if you walk around our town in the summer you see a lot of restaurants with tables outside. That's normal for you, but it used to be very unusual years ago, even in very hot weather. These changes have happened because of contact with other countries.

Student: Oh, that's interesting. I never thought of that. So are there any changes that you feel have not been so good?

Peter: Well, of course, cars are a problem. A few years ago I would have said that things were getting worse and worse, but in fact now there are more parking restrictions as well as pedestrianised areas, so I think the situation is more or less under control – though of course there's still room for improvement. You see a lot more cyclists about now, anyway. All in all, the town is a lot cleaner than it used to be, even when we take into account the pollution caused by cars.

Student: Is it really?

Peter: Oh, yes. People often complain about the litter in the streets, which is true, and it is always young people that get the blame for that. But you only have to look at old photographs to see how dirty the town used to be, mainly because of the smoke from factories and domestic fires. That's all changed. The river is much cleaner now too. You see a lot of people fishing in it, which didn't happen years ago because no fish could survive in it.

Student: The area near the river is very popular now, isn't it?

Peter: It definitely is. In fact, you could say that the centre of town has moved. It used to be the square in front of the town hall, that's the actual physical centre. It's the place people used to meet. But now, if you ask where town centre is, people will direct you to the river. That's where a lot of people congregate in the evening, young and old, to walk along the river bank, meet their friends and enjoy their leisure time.

Student: How did people spend their leisure time fifty years ago?

Peter: well...

(From *Fast Track to FCE*, 2001)

Pre-test Outline Template**Changes in a Town****Physical Features**

- I) town larger
- II) more people
- III) old buildings knocked down & new ones built
- IV) centre of town has moved to riverbank from square in front of Town hall
 - 1) people meet to spend leisure time

People's lifestyle

- I) there is wider variety of choice
 - 1) people travel
 - 2) foreigners
 - A) sports
 - a) past soccer
 - b) Am. Football
 - c) baseball
 - d) basketball
 - e) ice-hockey
 - f) basketball team
 - g) football team
 - B) food
 - a) positive effect
 - b) tables outside restaurants

Traffic

- I) cars
 - 1) They are a problem
 - 2) But situation is under control
 - A) parking restrictions
 - B) pedestrianised areas
 - C) more cyclists
 - 3) room for improvement
 - 4) town cleaner despite pollution caused by car

Environment

- I) Town is cleaner
 - 1) people complain about litter
 - A) It is true
 - B) young people get the blame
- II) Town was dirtier in the past
 - 1) smoke from factories and domestic fires
- III) River is cleaner
 - 1) people fish

Reference:

Roman numerals: Main ideas

Arabic numerals: Supporting ideas

Capital letters: Details

Small letters: Nuances

Rating scale:

Main ideas: 4

Supporting Ideas: 3

Details: 2

Nuances: 1

Pre-test Rating Scale

| Items | Main Ideas | Supporting Ideas | Details | Nuances |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|----------|----------|
| Physical Features | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| People's lifestyle | 1 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Traffic | 1 | 4 | 3 | - |
| Environment | 3 | 3 | 2 | - |
| Total | 9 | 10 | 7 | 9 |

Total Score: 89

APPENDIX 4 - Post-Test Instruments**Listening and Note-taking****Post-test****Pre-listening****Problems of urbanisation****Step 1****Introduction to the lecture topic**

Discuss your ideas with a partner.

1. Do people in our country generally prefer to live in the countryside or the city?
2. Do you think this is the same in other countries?
3. The title of the lecture includes the word 'problems'.
 - a) What problems do you think the speaker will mention?
 - b) What do you expect the speaker to talk about, apart from problems themselves?

Step 2**- Focus on vocabulary**

How many of these words or expressions do you know?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1. developing countries | 5. depopulation | 9. health |
| 2. congestion | 6. infrastructure | 10. stem |
| 3. developed countries | 7. productivity | |
| 4. growth rate | 8. endemic diseases | |

Work with a partner. Match the expressions above with their definitions below, by combining the numbers with the letters.

- a. rapidity of increase
- b. stop
- c. poor countries
- d. illnesses only found in a certain region
- e. rich countries
- f. roads, bridges sewers etc. regarded as a country's economic foundation
- g. accumulation
- h. a person's mental or physical condition
- i. reduction in the number of people in a certain area
- j. the capacity to produce

1-c;

First listening

Listen to the first part of the lecture delivered by Dr Adrienne Hunter from Toronto, Canada. We are going to play the first 4 minutes of the lecture. In this part the lecturer will talk about:

- *the reasons that drive people to move from the country to the city*
- *the effects of that on the process of urbanisation*
- *possible policies to reduce rural-urban migration.*

As you listen take notes in a separate piece of paper. The lecture internal structure is provided to help you organise the information. Use telegraphic language, conventional symbols and abbreviations. Write down your notes in one of the formats you know

Second Listening

The teacher will now play the lecture a second time. Look at your notes and listen carefully for points where, during the first listening:

- *You didn't catch what Dr hunter said*
- *You didn't have time to note all the details*
- *You misunderstood what she said.*

Follow up

How good do you think your performance has been? Tick your choice!

- *Excellent*
- *Fairly good*
- *Average*
- *Poor*

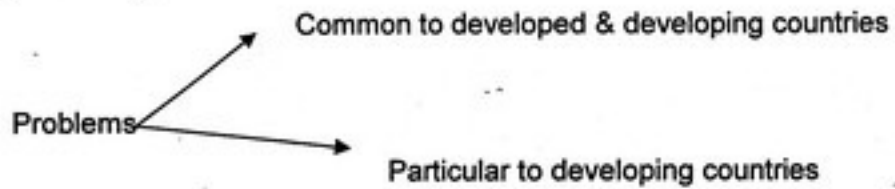
Submit your test!

Listening & Note-taking

Problems of Urbanisation

Lecture Internal Structure

Introduction:



Main Body:

- 5 consequences of uncontrolled urbanisation
- 3 possible policies to stem uncontrolled urbanisation

Conclusion:

???

Post-test Transcript

Problems of urbanisation

Today I want to discuss problems of urbanisation / in particular I want to talk about those problems which are peculiar to developing economies / and to discuss three possible policies / which could be used to control or uh / to stem / uncontrolled urbanization in developing countries / certain urban problems of course are common to both developed / and developing countries / for example / poor housing, unemployment, problems connected with traffic / for example air pollution, congestion and so on / however there are problems which are very peculiar to developing economies / and this is due to the fact that developing countries need to create a basic infrastructure which is necessary for industrialisation / and consequently for economic growth / in fact it's the provision of this infrastructure which constitutes the urbanisation process itself / and this uh infrastructure / may have undesired effects on the economy as a whole / now it's these undesirable consequences of... or effects which I'd like to deal with first / I'm going to talk about five main consequences of this uncontrolled urbanisation // in the first instance there's the problem of migration of people from the country to the city / people living in the country often see the city as more desirable place to live / whether they're living in developing or developed countries / but the problem is much more serious in a developing country / because there are in fact more people who wish to migrate to the city / now the fact of people migrating to the city causes a certain depopulation of rural areas // and a second consequence / is the result / or the result of this is a decrease in the production of food / and in the supply of food to the country as a whole / this in turn can also lead to a rise in prices / because of the law of supply and demand // as a result of people moving to the city / you get a high urban population growth rate / now this isn't not this isn't due not only to the fact of more adults moving to the city / but can also be due to traditions of these people from the country / who perhaps from rural areas have a tradition of large families and so on / so the ci... population of the cities increases with these numerous children of large families // this leads to a fourth consequence / which is a dramatic pressure on the supply of social services in urban areas / in particular / services related to health and education / in relation / in relation to health services / we can see that there are endemic diseases which could be made worse by overcrowding / people coming from the country to the city / and for example in the stresses on services in education / with more children there's a need for more schools and more teachers and so on and so on // a fifth area which is affected by uncontrolled urbanisation is that of the labour supply / often uncontrolled urbanisation leads to an excess of labour supply in the cities / and this can lead in turn to an informal kind of labour activity / which might be called low-prod... productivity activities / for example people selling things in the streets / or for example you often find in large urban areas in a developing country / children who watch cars while their owners are doing something else / and then they ask for tips when the owners return / this is really a sort of undesirable type of labour / so these are in fact the main consequences of uncontrolled urbanisation / now I'd like to move on to three possible policies which could be developed / to stem this kind of uncontrolled urbanisation in developing countries / the first one would be to promote a more equal land distribution / in this way farmers would be more motivated to stay on the land / they would be able to work more land and thus be able to feed their families more adequately / often the reason why farmers wish to go to the city is that they cannot grow enough food to both feed their families and earn a living / so a more equal land distribution is one such policy to stem this kind of move to the city / a second policy would be to improve the supply of social services in the rural areas / particularly in the field of health and education / country people often f... move to the city because they feel that these services are better in the city / if they could compare the services they receive which are improved and the ones in the city they might feel there was perhaps not much difference / and it would be another reason for not moving / a third possible policy would be to give financial assistance to agriculture / especially to the small landowner / now obviously the problem of uncontrolled urbanisation / and the consequences which are not favourable / is a difficult problem / to resolve / but these three types of policies could help to reduce the problem / which is felt in particular in developing countries /

(From Study Listening, 2004)

Post-test Outline Template**Problems of Urbanisation****Introduction**

- I. Prob's common to dev'd & dev'ing countries
 - a. Poor housing
 - b. Unemploy^t
 - c. Traffic
 - d. Air pollutⁿ
- II. Particular prob's of dev'ing economies
 - 1. Need for infrastructure
 - A. → industrialisatⁿ
 - a. ∴ economic growth
 - B. Provisⁿ of Infrastructure
 - a. → urbanisation process
 - C. Undesired effects on economy

Main body**Consequences of uncontrolled urbanisatⁿ**

- III. Migratⁿ to city
 - 1. + ppl migrate to cities in dev'ing countries
 - A. Better place to live
- IV. Depopulatⁿ of rural area
 - 1. Decrease in food production
 - A. → rise in price
 - a. b' of law of supply & demand
- V. High urban populatⁿ growth rate
 - 1. More adults in city
 - 2. Rural families w/ + children
- VI. Pressure on social services, esp. Health & Education
 - 1. Endemic diseases
 - A. Overcrowding
 - 2. Need for + schools & teachers
 - A. + children
- VII. Increase in labour supply
 - 1. Low-productivity activities
 - a. Street vending
 - b. car watching
- Poss. policies to stem uncontrolled urbanisatⁿ
- VIII. Promote + = land distributⁿ
 - 1. Farmers will stay on land
 - A. b' able to feed families
- IX. Improve rural social services
 - 1. Health & Education
 - A. If services improved no reason for moving
- X. Give financial assistance to Agriculture
 - 1. Esp. to small landowners

Conclusion

- XI. Prob's & consequences of uncontrolled urbanisatⁿ
 - 1. difficult to solve
 - 2. Polices could help

Reference:

Roman Numerals: Main ideas

Arabic Numerals: Supporting Ideas

Capital Letters: Details

Small Letters: Nuances

Rating scale:

Main Ideas: 4

Supporting Ideas: 3

Details: 2

Nuances: 1

Rating Scale

| Structure | Main Ideas | Supporting Ideas | Details | Nuances |
|--------------|------------|------------------|----------|----------|
| Introduction | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Main Body | 8 | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| Conclusion | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| TOTAL | 11 | 13 | 9 | 9 |

Total Score: 110

APPENDIX 5 -Survey Questionnaire**Listening and Note-taking****Survey****How true of you the statement is?**

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Read each item and choose a response (1 to 5) and write it in the space provided.

1. Before the Strategy Training Program (STP) I used to take notes in other subjects. ____
2. I learned to take notes in the STP. ____
3. At the beginning, the STP seemed very difficult to accomplish. ____
4. I have passed the STP successfully. ____
5. Before the STP, I wasn't aware of the steps a student takes
to learn English as a foreign language (EFL). ____
6. To learn to use listening strategies has helped me focus on learning EFL. ____
7. I find note-taking useful to understand, store and recall recorded information. ____
8. Listening and note-taking have helped me perform better in English. ____
9. It will be helpful to implement an STP to improve other skills in the English classroom.

APPENDIX 6 - Interviewing

Facultad de Ingeniería

Taller de Inglés 2

Name:

Date:

Interviewing

Interview 1 (life history)

1. What English background knowledge do you have?
2. How did you take notes in the past?
3. How much experience did you have in listening to English speech?

Interview 2 (contemporary experience)

1. How do you like taking a strategy-training programme in listening and note-taking?
2. What do you do when you are asked to listen to and take notes on a lecture or an interview?

Interview 3 (reflection on the meaning)

1. What does it mean for your college life to have learned strategies to take notes more effectively?
2. How has your English knowledge improved by the use of listening and note-taking strategies?

(Adapted from Seidman, I. 1998. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*. Second Ed.)

Appendix 7: Statistics Terms

The definitions and explanations for these terms were taken from Brown (1988), Bachman (2004) and Rosales (2003).

CENTRAL TENDENCY

It indicates the middle or typical behaviour of the group. There are three different indicators of central tendency:

Mean: It is virtually the same as the arithmetic average which is obtained by adding up all the scores and dividing the total score by the number of scores involved.

Mode: It is the score which occurs most frequently in a set of scores.

Median: It is defined as the middle point in a distribution, or the point below which 50% of the scores fall, and above which the other 50% of the scores fall.

DISPERSION

It indicates the performance of those individuals who vary from the typical behaviour. There are two typical indicators of the dispersion of a set of scores:

Range: It is defined as the number of points between the highest score on a measure and the lowest score plus one (plus one because it is viewed as including the scores at both ends).

Standard deviation: It is a sort of average of the differences of all the scores from the mean. The standard deviation is a regular distance that is expressed in score points that can be thought of as marking off certain portions of the distribution, each of which is equal in length along the abscissa (x-axis).

Coefficient of variation: It is defined as the ratio of the standard deviation from the mean.

DISTRIBUTION

The scores which are obtained from tests form a distribution because the test takers' scores vary and are distributed along a range, from the highest to the lowest, forming a score distribution. This score distribution is a distribution for a variable, with each score constituting a value for that variable.

Normal distribution: The distribution is symmetrical when the distribution of scores above (to the right of) the central scores is a mirror image of the distribution below (to the left of the central score).

Skewed distributions: Skewed distributions are asymmetrical since the shapes of the upper and lower portions of the distributions are characterised by having a peak toward one end of the distribution and longer tail towards the other. A distribution is said to be positively skewed when

the longer tail is at the upper end (to the right); while, when the longer tail is at the lower end, it is said to be negatively skewed (to the left).

Percentile: It indicates the point below which a determined percentage of the scores fall.

FREQUENCY

It specifies how many students performed a certain task in the same way. The arrangement of score values from high to low and the frequency of each score value is called a frequency distribution.

NONPARAMETRIC TESTS

Nonparametric tests for two related samples allow researchers to test for differences between paired scores when the assumptions required by the paired-samples *t* test³⁰ cannot or would rather not be made. The Sign test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test compare the distributions of two related variables.

Wilcoxon signed-rank test: The Wilcoxon signed-ranks method tests the null hypothesis that two related medians are the same. This test allows researchers to compare a single median against a known value or paired medians from the same or matched sample.

Sign test: The Sign test computes the differences between the two variables for all cases (in this case the pre-test and post-test scores) and classifies the differences as either positive, negative, or tied. If the two variables are similarly distributed, the number of positive and negative differences will not differ significantly.

Null hypothesis: Hypotheses are statements about the possible outcomes of a study. Hence, they show the different ways which the researcher envisions that the study will turn out. A *null hypothesis* (*H₀*) is essentially a hypothesis of no relationship or difference between two or more variables. A null hypothesis is always implicit for each statistical decision in a study even if it is not explicitly stated.

***p*-value:** It indicates the level of confidence with which researchers reject or accept the *H₀*. When we specify the 95 per cent confidence level, we are saying that we want to be at least 95 per cent confident that we are correctly rejecting the *H₀* that the observed difference or correlation could be due to chance. What this also means, however, is that there is at least 5 per cent of probability that we may erroneously reject the *H₀* when it is, in fact, true. The probability of making this error of falsely rejecting the *H₀* when it is true is called the level of significance, symbolised by '*p*' for probability.

³⁰ When comparing two means the appropriate test is a *t*-test. Paired-samples *t*-test is used for two-related samples (Nunan, 1992:35).

CORRELATION

A correlation is a relationship between two or more entities. These entities can be constructs, e.g. language learning and motivation; or they may be variables, e.g. sets of test scores. By relationship, we mean that variations in one entity correspond to variations in the other.

Multiple linear regression analysis: One interpretation and possible use of correlations is to predict or explain variation in one variable in terms of another. Thus if something is known about the relationship between variables X and Y , a more accurate prediction can be made about unknown values of Y than if only the mean of Y were known. It follows that if we knew the relationship between a given variable, Y , and several other variables, $X_1, X_2 \dots X_n$, then we might be able to predict future values of Y even more accurately. This extension is the basis of multiple linear regression analysis, in which a given dependent variable is regressed not only on a single, but on multiple predictors, or independent variables. A use of multiple linear regression is to explain the relative importance of different components in a total score.

R Square: It indicates the part of the dependent variable (total score) which is explained by the set of the independent variables (MI, SI, D, N).

Adjusted R Square: It is the adjustment to the R^2 based on the number of cases and the number of independent variables.

Unstandardised Coefficients: They are the coefficient of direct scoring for the regression equation.

Standardised Beta Coefficients: They are based on z scores of the variables. They indicate the amount of change which will be produced in the dependent variable by each unit of change in the independent variable, holding the others constant. The higher the value, the greater the influence of that independent variable will be on the dependent variable.

Z scores: This type of standardised score shows how far a given raw score is from the mean in standard deviation units.

Zero order of correlation: It is the calculated correlation coefficient of each variable obtained independently, ignoring the presence of other variables.

Partial Correlation: It indicates the correlation which remains between two variables after removing the correlation that is due to their mutual association with the other variables.

Part Correlation: It indicates the correlation between the dependent variable (in this case, total score) and an independent variable (in this case, MI, SI, D, N) when the linear effects of the other independent variables in the model have been removed from the independent variable.

